THE 4PS OF ETHNIC CULTURE IN TERMS OF AUTHENTICITY ON THE PLATE

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Abstract

Ethnic restaurants need a different marketing approach from conventional restaurants because they promote a region's culinary identity. As they have expanded and become more widespread, customer profiles and expectations have evolved, giving rise to ethnic fine dining restaurants with more refined service. Against this backdrop, the study examines how restaurants defined as ethnic fine dining can create value based on culinary identity. Accordingly, the study examines the 4Ps of ethnic fine-dining restaurants through the lens of authenticity. It adopts a qualitative multiple-case design, focusing on eight purposively selected Asian-cuisine fine-dining restaurants in Istanbul. Data were gathered from secondary sources—including restaurant menus, websites, and social media accounts—between November 3 and 12, 2024. The data were coded according to themes derived from the 4P marketing mix elements and analyzed using content analysis. The findings show that while similar ethnic narratives and representations appeared across cases, restaurants used different strategies to balance authentic representation with innovation. The study conceptualizes marketing ethnic identity–based cuisine in fine dining and offers strategies that balance innovation with cultural representation. It finds that restaurants face marketing-mix limitations and recommends menus balancing diversity and originality, Asian-Turkish fusion using local ingredients, and creative names and experiential presentation. Restaurants should also improve websites, maintain a strong social media presence, feature ethnic décor, clearly communicate accessibility and valet services, and offer varied price points aligned with value.

Keywords: Ethnic Restaurant; Food and beverage establishments; Fine Dining Restaurants; Marketing strategies.

OS 4 PS DA CULTURA ÉTNICA NO PRATO

Resumo

Os restaurantes étnicos requerem uma estratégia de marketing distinta da dos restaurantes convencionais, pois oferecem a identidade culinária de uma região. Com sua expansão e maior disseminação, o perfil dos clientes e as expectativas dos consumidores também mudaram, o que deu origem a restaurantes étnicos de fine dining, que se destacam por um serviço mais refinado. Nesse contexto, este estudo investiga como construir, em restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining*, um valor fundamentado na identidade culinária. Assim, o estudo busca examinar os 4 Ps dos restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining* sob a perspectiva da autenticidade. Foi delineado como um estudo qualitativo de casos múltiplos e abrangeu oito restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining* que servem culinária asiática em Istambul, selecionados por amostragem intencional. Os dados foram coletados entre 3 e 12 de novembro de 2024, a partir de fontes secundárias, como cardápios, sites e contas de redes sociais dos restaurantes. Os resultados indicam que, embora os casos analisados apresentassem narrativas e representações étnicas semelhantes, foram desenvolvidas estratégias distintas de autenticidade e inovação na representação. O estudo conceitua a comercialização de produtos culinários ligados à identidade étnica no contexto do *fine dining* e propõe estratégias de marketing que conciliem inovação e representação cultural. Identifica limitações no mix de marketing dos restaurantes e recomenda equilibrar diversidade e originalidade nos cardápios; criar pratos de fusão asiático-turcos com ingredientes locais; investir em nomes e apresentações criativos; aprimorar sites e redes sociais; valorizar elementos étnicos na decoração; informar sobre acessibilidade; e oferecer opções para diferentes orçamentos, equilibrando preço e valor.

Palavras-chave: Restaurante étnico; Empreendimentos de restauração; Restaurantes de *Fine dining*; Estratégias de marketing.

LOS 4P DE LA CULTURA ÉTNICA EN EL PLATO

Resumen

Los restaurantes étnicos requieren un enfoque de marketing distinto al de los convencionales, pues comercializan la identidad culinaria de una región. A medida que se han expandido y se han vuelto más comunes, han cambiado tanto el perfil de sus clientes como las expectativas de los consumidores. Esto ha dado lugar a restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining*, que se distinguen por ofrecer un servicio más refinado. En este contexto, el estudio examina cómo crear valor a partir de la identidad culinaria en restaurantes de *fine dining* de carácter étnico. En consecuencia, el estudio se propone examinar las 4P de los restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining* desde la perspectiva de la autenticidad. Se diseñó como un estudio cualitativo de casos múltiples e incluyó ocho restaurantes étnicos de *fine dining* de cocina asiática en Estambul, seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional. Los datos se recopilaron entre el 3 y el 12 de noviembre de 2024 a partir de fuentes secundarias, como los menús de los restaurantes, sus sitios web y sus cuentas en redes sociales. Los hallazgos muestran que, pese a la presencia de narrativas y representaciones étnicas similares en los casos analizados, se desarrollaron estrategias distintas para lograr una representación auténtica e impulsar la innovación. El estudio aporta a la teoría al conceptualizar la comercialización de productos culinarios vinculados a la identidad étnica en el *fine dining*, y a la práctica al proponer estrategias que equilibren la innovación y la representación cultural. Concluye que estos restaurantes enfrentan limitaciones de marketing. Para superarlas, deberían equilibrar la diversidad y la originalidad en sus menús, crear fusiones asiático-turcas con ingredientes locales y usar nombres creativos y presentaciones experienciales. También conviene mejorar sus sitios web, mantener una sólida presencia en redes sociales, destacar elementos étnicos en la decoración, informar sobre la accesibilidad y ofrecer opciones para distintos presupuestos con una adecuada relación calidad-precio.

Palabras clave: Restaurante étnico; Establecimientos de restauración; Restaurantes de *Fine dining*; Estrategias de marketing.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Restaurants need to implement effective marketing strategies to increase awareness of their products and services, reach their target audience, and positively influence consumer behaviour. A well-designed marketing strategy helps restaurants differentiate themselves from competitors by highlighting the distinctive aspects of their offerings (Sukur, Sumarjan, & Jalis, 2024).

Because consumer expectations differ from those of ethnic fine dining restaurants, these restaurants adopt distinct marketing strategies. The increase in supply and the growing demand for ethnic restaurants have created a competitive environment for such establishments.

Various studies emphasize that ethnic restaurants need to strengthen their marketing efforts to survive in this highly competitive environment (Cevizkaya, 2015; Başarangil & İnam, 2017; Yavuz & Mesci, 2020). In contrast, ethnic restaurants face several dilemmas. Ethnic restaurants are not merely places that serve food; they are also spaces of representation where cultural identity is staged. All elements within the servicescape—including decorative items, employees, and even consumers—carry symbolic meaning intended to reinforce this representation (Pérez-Armañanzas & Couceiro, 2023).

Moreover, the cultural identity these elements represent functions as capital (Chatzopoulou & Gorton, 2025). However, transforming these authentic elements into objects of consumption may pose risks, such as simplifying, homogenizing, or distorting culture by confining it to fixed patterns (Balakrishnan Nair, Sinha & Dileep, 2020; Bolzoni, 2022; Cheng et al., 2024).

These tensions around representing culinary culture directly affect marketing decisions. This shows that the elements of the marketing mix, which already require effective planning, must be addressed at an even more nuanced level in ethnic restaurants. Given this need, the present study examines the 4P marketing activities of ethnic fine dining restaurants in terms of authenticity. In line with this aim, the menus, websites, and social media accounts of ethnic fine dining restaurants serving Asian cuisine in Istanbul were examined within the main marketing mix themes: product, promotion, place, and price.

This research sought to answer what ethnic fine dining restaurants include in their marketing activities within the marketing mix and how they address ethnic elements that reflect cultural identity within this framework; accordingly, the study compared the restaurants. In determining the research sample, the relatively greater interest in Asian cuisine compared to other types of ethnic restaurants, as well as the noticeable increase observed in the number and variety of ethnic restaurants in Istanbul under the influence of globalization, were influential factors (Teyin et al., 2017).

The marketing of ethnic restaurants has been a subject of discussion in the international literature for some time. Studies on this issue exist both globally (Roseman, 2006; Ha & Jang, 2010; Chhabra et al., 2013; Marinkovic, Senic, & Mimovic, 2015; Pratminingsih, Astuty, & Widyatami, 2018; Pérez-Armañanzas & Couceiro, 2023) and in the Istanbul context (Başarangil & İnam, 2017; Yetimoğlu, 2017; Gündoğdu & Buyruk, 2021).

Nevertheless, only a limited number of studies could be identified on the marketing of ethnic fine dining restaurants (Clemes, Gan, & Sriwongrat, 2013; Chen et al., 2020; Liu, Wu, & Wang, 2020; Ma & Hsiao, 2020; Oh & Kim, 2020; Lee & Liu, 2023; Chatzopoulou & Gorton, 2025; Zheng et al., 2026). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature on marketing ethnic fine dining restaurants. In addition, the study offers a theoretical contribution by examining the 4Ps of the marketing mix through the lens of ethnic identity.

At the same time, it provides sectoral and practical contributions by developing marketing recommendations for presenting ethnic culture-based products in fine dining establishments. Although the study was conducted in the Istanbul context, its theoretical and practical outputs are expected to benefit the marketing activities of all ethnic fine dining restaurants in operation.

2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Ethnic restaurants, defined as restaurants that prepare and serve dishes specific to a specific culture, whether geographically, ethnically, or historically (Strickland, 2013), reflect the culinary culture of a specific region through their menus, interior and exterior design, and staff (Lu, Gürsoy & Lu, 2015). Unlike other restaurants, ethnic restaurants showcase the authentic culture, here meaning the traditional practices, flavours, and customs, of a specific country or region (Jang, Ha, & Park, 2012).

Ethnic restaurants serve as spaces to develop intercultural relationships and explore different cultures through food (Sukalamaka & Boyce, 2007; Karaosmanoğlu, 2020). Consumers' primary expectations from ethnic restaurants include ethnic cuisine, cultural interaction, and authentic flavours (Jang et al., 2012; Khan & Oyewole, 2014; Lu et al., 2015).

As awareness and interest in cultural differences grow, consumers increasingly seek authentic and unique experiences. In line with this growing trend, ethnic authenticity has become an attractive factor and positioning strategy (Robinson & Clifford, 2012; Okumuş et al., 2013). Consumers are motivated to experience ethnic restaurants for various reasons. Among these motivations, the desire for an authentic, unique, diverse, and extraordinary dining experience stands out (Ebster & Guist, 2005).

Consumers desire to experience authentic ethnic cuisine and different cultures through their dining experiences (Roseman, 2006; Tsai & Lu, 2012). In parallel, restaurant operators, aware of the value consumers place on authentic and unique experiences, emphasize these elements (Lu & Fine, 1995). Thus, they must implement marketing efforts that attract consumers (Yarmacı Güvenç, Köz, & Evren, 2023).

By highlighting unique cultural offerings and conducting marketing activities, the marketing mix helps organize ethnic restaurant operators. In this study, the marketing mix also served as a framework for analyzing the marketing activities of ethnic fine dining restaurants. Meeting target audience needs depends on managing the marketing mix—product, promotion, place, and price (Altunışık, Özdemir, & Torlak, 2020, p. 296).

Through this framework, ethnic restaurants offer distinctive dishes that reflect cultural elements and extend them into the dining space (Verbeke & López, 2005). Incorporating elements of ethnic culture into the dining environment, such as interior décor, restaurant design, or atmospheric elements like music, enriches the consumer experience (George, 2001; Ebster & Guist, 2005; Wood & Munoz, 2007).

Ethnic restaurants also emphasize the hedonic aspects of the experience through dining environments that reflect their culture and values. Therefore, atmospheric elements are critical to consumer satisfaction and perceptions of quality (Ha & Jang, 2012). Research emphasizes that consumers not only gain a unique, authentic experience but also feel positive emotions, even briefly, from the food and atmosphere (Liu & Mattila, 2015).

Within the price dimension, what matters most in choosing ethnic restaurants is whether the price aligns with the unique experience (Clemes et al., 2013), not the price itself. Because different countries' culinary cultures may be viewed as either inexpensive or high-quality and costly, pricing strategies are more complex for these ethnic restaurants (Ma & Hsiao, 2020). Ethnic restaurants act as cultural ambassadors, conveying culinary heritage through promotion (El-Said, Smith & Al Ghafri, 2021). Promotion is especially important as it persuades consumers unfamiliar with the culture (Lai, Lu, & Liu, 2020).

Thus, marketing mix management differs for ethnic restaurants. Another observed phenomenon in consumer preferences is the desire to eat in restaurants that not only satisfy their hunger but also provide a sense of well-being and pleasure. Fine dining restaurants with different concepts are meeting this desire (Top & Yarmacı, 2021). One such concept is ethnic fine dining restaurants. As this study notes, consumers' perceptions, expectations, and attitudes shift by service type, which also affects marketing mix management.

Consumers' perceptions, expectations, and attitudes vary depending on the services restaurants provide. In other words, even the same consumer may have different expectations when visiting a fast-food restaurant than a fine-dining restaurant (Jang et al., 2012). Consumer behaviour toward ethnic restaurants varies by cuisine type, restaurant category, and consumer characteristics.

It has been argued that restaurant type moderates the relationship between consumers' emotions and behavioural intentions (Kim & Moon, 2009). Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Kendall (2011) highlighted value for the price paid, quality expectations, variety, and innovativeness as important factors influencing fine dining restaurant visitor decisions. A study on Korean restaurants found that in casual restaurants, consumers prioritized food quality, whereas in fine dining restaurants, atmospheric elements mattered more than food (Jang et al., 2012).

For fine dining customers, ethnic and unique flavours are exciting (Aktaş Polat & Aktaş, 2022). Ethnic fine dining customers seek good value; rather than cutting prices, restaurants should stand out through high service, special dishes, authenticity, and a good atmosphere (Clemes et al., 2013). Thus, service type shapes marketing and the marketing mix in ethnic restaurants. In ethnic fusion restaurants, creativity and chef skill boost visit intentions in upscale venues, while menu diversity has a greater effect in lower-priced restaurants (Liu et al., 2020).

In Istanbul, ethnic and unique flavours were seen as reflections of menu variety, adding excitement and satisfaction (Aktaş Polat & Polat, 2022). In ethnic fine dining, customers value exotic experiences, social standing, and service. They prefer fresh, high-quality, well-presented food (Sriwongrat, 2008). Marketing for ethnic restaurants should align with the service they offer. Lee and Liu (2023) note that food quality and skilled service matter in ethnic fine dining, but dishes must also present authentic culinary culture.

Even as marketing strategies differ by service, these restaurants convey a sense of cultural identity. It is argued that for ethnic culture to become a form of capital and to be marketed to broader audiences, it must undergo a process of "cultural translation." Here, cultural translation refers to adapting ethnic products to consumer preferences to make them marketable (Bolzoni, 2022); however, in the context of cultural cuisine, this process risks simplifying and standardizing ethnic identity, detaching it from its original and authentic roots (Pérez-Armañanzas & Couceiro, 2023).

As Aybek and Alphan (2021) note, marketing authentic products creates a paradox: it revives cultural heritage by increasing awareness of these products, but it also threatens authenticity by promoting tourist-oriented products that abandon traditional methods. Ethnic cuisines are adapted to consumers' tastes, expectations, and preferences, and in this process, restaurateurs create a staged authenticity (Arviv, Shani & Poria, 2024).

At the same time, cultural authenticity not only increases consumer trust but also strengthens willingness to pay higher prices (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Lu et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2022). This situation further intensifies the authenticity paradox. Although the authenticity inherent in ethnic culinary cultures is a strategic tool for businesses, the dilemmas it entails demonstrate that marketing this authenticity must be handled carefully.

In their study, Chatzopoulou and Gorton (2025) argue that authenticity in ethnic restaurants is not a fixed, theoretical concept but a dynamic process. They argue that businesses may choose one of three marketing strategies that best fit them: traditional commitment, market orientation, or creative innovativeness. From another perspective, the more authentic and unique the experience, the stronger the image it forms in consumers' minds.

Perceived authenticity in ethnic restaurants is significantly and positively related to perceived quality (Lu et al., 2015). However, it is important to understand what authenticity means for consumers. In their study, Koufodontis and Gaki (2025) argue that culinary identity is constructed through digital narratives and that consumers' perceptions of authenticity develop not from historical accuracy or objective reality but from subsequently constructed narratives.

Although emphasizing authenticity and uniqueness is important in restaurant marketing strategies, authenticity claims should be made carefully, and content inconsistent with ethnic characteristics should be avoided (Kim & Jang, 2016). Nevertheless, considering the dynamic nature of culture and authenticity, as well as the variability of consumers' perceptions of authenticity, as also noted by Chhabra et al. (2013), the perception of authenticity

reconstructed and reinterpreted in ethnic restaurants may be effectively communicated to consumers through digital tools, place, and atmosphere as an effective marketing strategy.

Ethnic restaurants should not only be directly associated with the culture of the cuisine they offer, but also build awareness of that culture (El-Said et al., 2021). However, to build that awareness, they must first reach their target audience through a tailored marketing strategy. Ultimately, businesses can sustain their existence in a competitive environment only if they pursue a compatible marketing strategy. Their ability to fulfill their cultural representation function likewise depends on their ability to survive.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study examined the 4P marketing activities of ethnic fine dining restaurants through the lens of authenticity. To achieve this, a qualitative research method was used. Instead of focusing on one restaurant's marketing, the study compared patterns and differences across several ethnic restaurants and highlighted exemplary practices. While a case study design allows an in-depth examination of a specific phenomenon, a multiple-case study design allows examination and comparison of examples across different phenomena.

Thus, this research used a multiple-case study design. The research population consisted of ethnic fine dining restaurants in Istanbul. The concentration of ethnic and fine dining restaurants in Istanbul influenced the selection of the study population. The selection of restaurants serving Asian cuisine was motivated by the global popularity of ethnic Asian restaurants and their prominence in Istanbul's Michelin Guide.

The research sample was determined using criterion sampling, a purposive sampling method. The sampling criteria were defined as operating in Istanbul, offering fine dining, serving Asian cuisine, and having accessible secondary data sources, such as a website, social media account, and menu. Exclusion criteria included being located outside Istanbul, offering fast casual or casual dining rather than fine dining service, serving an ethnic cuisine other than Asian cuisine, and lacking a digital presence.

To identify restaurants serving Asian cuisine in the fine dining category and narrow the sample, the Michelin Guide served as a reference. Accordingly, restaurants operating in Istanbul, listed in the Michelin Guide, and serving Asian cuisine under the keywords "Asian influences", "Asian Modern", "Chinese Modern", "Japanese Cuisine", "Modern Japanese Cuisine", "Modern Thai Cuisine" and "Thai Cuisine" were included in the sample. As a result, the study identified and included eight restaurants after verifying their service type, cuisine type, and digital presence.

To ensure objectivity during coding and to protect the confidentiality of the restaurants within the scope of the research, these eight restaurants were coded as R1, R2, …, R8, with “R” representing restaurant. The study dataset was compiled from secondary data sources, namely the menus, websites, and social media accounts of these restaurants, between November 3, 2024, and November 12, 2024. For the restaurant menus, we considered menu categories, dish names, price information, menu structure, and other restaurant details.

For the websites, the dataset included all available sections, including the homepage, contact page, reservation page, and photo gallery. For social media, Instagram was the most-used platform. The last 100 posts shared on these accounts, along with the featured stories and descriptions, were added to the research dataset. Folders were created for each restaurant's dataset, using the assigned codes, and the files were uploaded to MAXQDA for data analysis.

This approach established comparable datasets for each case, and thematic content analysis was conducted. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data. Content analysis, which systematically analyzes the content of written, visual, or audio materials, enables the acquisition of information about a specific topic or problem and the derivation of meaningful conclusions from that information (Alanka, 2024). This consideration favoured content analysis. Within thematic content analysis, a two-stage hybrid coding strategy was used.

First, the study conducted a preliminary review of each restaurant’s dataset and, in the first stage of analysis, subjected the datasets to deductive classification within the 4P marketing mix framework: product, place, promotion, and price. In the second stage, using an inductive approach, the data within each main marketing mix theme were recoded through inductively generated subthemes.

This approach allowed the 4Ps to serve as an organizing framework for data analysis while enabling interpretive analyses shaped by subthemes specific to ethnic fine dining restaurants that extended beyond the 4Ps. During the pilot coding process, coding indicators were developed for themes and subthemes. Table 1 presents the main themes and subthemes developed within the scope of the study.

Table 1. Main Themes and Subthemes

Main Themes	Subthemes	
Product	Menu Variety	
	Ethnic Dishes	
	Menu Creativity	Experience Creation
		Creative Naming
		Fusion
Promotion	Storytelling	
	Awards And Ratings	
	Social Media Content	
	Website Content	
Place	Location	Valet Service,
		Transportation Options
		Location Information.
	Ethnic Elements In Decoration	
	Operating Hours	
	Reservations	
Price	Price Range	
	Average Price	

Source: Created by the authors.

Examples of coding indicators developed to clarify criteria for identifying the themes and subthemes are provided: In the product theme, menu items were evaluated under the menu variety category. Traditional dishes specific to an ethnic cuisine were coded under ethnic dishes. Narratives on websites, social media, or menus about dish origin, cultural background, or the chef’s approach were

coded as storytelling. Next, in the place theme, the presence of a reservation link or contact information on websites or social media indicated the reservations subtheme.

For ethnic elements in decoration, coding occurred when website or social media visuals featured interior motifs that evoked cultural and ethnic identity. In the price theme, the subthemes of price range and average price were coded based on the current prices available at the time of data collection. Regarding the process, the researchers simultaneously and individually coded the main themes and subthemes using these indicators. Afterward, each researcher reviewed others' coding. The researchers then discussed the codes and finalized themes, subthemes, and coding decisions by consensus. Finally, when coding was complete, findings were tabulated and organized for comparative analysis across cases.

The study addressed reliability and validity using qualitative research criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. For credibility, datasets for each restaurant were stored in separate folders. A codebook explained the indicators for main themes and subthemes, supporting systematic analysis and coding consistency. To ensure confirmability, researchers individually coded the data using MAXQDA; they then compared the results to produce the findings.

Transferability was addressed by giving detailed reports of sampling, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analysis procedures. Themes and subthemes were decided during content analysis to align with the study's purpose and ensure relevance, clarity, and comprehensibility. The research data were obtained from publicly accessible digital secondary sources: menus, websites, and social media accounts.

This dataset provides systematic indicators of restaurants' marketing strategies within the 4P marketing mix framework. The study assumes that the codes and themes capture the indicators present in the dataset and adequately represent the marketing activities. Based on this, the study makes a theoretical contribution by examining the marketing activities of food and beverage establishments in ethnic fine dining contexts. In addition, showing how culinary identity-based products are marketed offers guidance for planning marketing strategies in restaurant businesses.

However, using secondary sources has certain limitations. Because the traditional marketing mix has been considered insufficient for services, the services marketing mix was expanded with people, physical evidence, and process (Ulema & Kaymaz, 2021, p. 25). Nonetheless, the literature mostly maintains that traditional marketing mix elements are core, and other components are auxiliary (Altunışık et al., 2020, p. 297).

Furthermore, the data collection technique used in this study did not allow the collection of evidence on people, process, and physical evidence in the 7P marketing mix for service businesses. Because examining these elements with primary data, such as field observations or interviews, was more appropriate, the study used the 4P framework. This was seen as a limitation. Therefore, future research using the 7P framework, supported by primary data from observation or interviews, is expected to make both theoretical and practical contributions.

4 RESULTS ANALYSIS

4.1 Findings

The research findings were examined under four main marketing mix themes: product, promotion, place and price. The descriptive findings for ethnic fine dining restaurants serving Asian cuisine are presented in Table2.

Table 2. Descriptive Findings for Restaurants

Restaurant Code	Cuisine Type	Est. Year	Location	Business Type
R1	Asian–Turkish Cuisine	2003	Beşiktaş	Independent restaurant
R2	Thai Cuisine	2006	Beyoğlu	Chain restaurant
R3	Asian–Japanese Cuisine	2012	Beşiktaş	Chain restaurant
R4	Authentic–Modern Japanese Cuisine	2016	Sarıyer	Chain restaurant
R5	Japanese Cuisine	2021	Şişli	Hotel-affiliated chain restaurant
R6	Far Eastern Cuisine	2022	Bakırköy	Hotel-affiliated chain restaurant
R7	Chinese–Cantonese Cuisine	2023	Beşiktaş	Chain restaurant
R8	Japanese Cuisine	2023	Beşiktaş	Hotel-affiliated independent restaurant

Source: Created by the authors.

As shown in Table 2, the restaurants examined offered a range of Asian cuisines. In addition, some restaurants offered fusion cuisine across national and technical aspects, such as Asian Turkish cuisine or authentic modern Japanese cuisine, while others focused solely on a single country's cuisine. The oldest restaurant has been open for 22 years. Half of the restaurants serving Asian fine dining opened within the last five years. Each restaurant was located on the European side of Istanbul, mostly in the Beşiktaş district. In terms of business type, the restaurants ranged from independent to global or national chains.

The findings in Table 3 show that restaurant menus differ. R5 offered the most diverse menu options, followed by R3 and R4. R8 appears to have the most limited menu; however, this is because the restaurant serves only a tasting menu. Regarding appetizers, R5 and R6 were prominent in cold options, whereas R5, R3, and R7 were prominent in hot appetizers. Table 4 presents the findings on ethnic dishes on the menus. Main courses play a significant role in all menus, with R4 and R5 the most prominent. R4 integrates Asian cuisine with robata, whereas R3 and R5 use teppanyaki. R2 offers a variety of dishes, primarily curries and noodles. R4 and R5 stand out for their dessert variety.

Table 3. Menu Variety in Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Menu Category	Restaurant Code							
	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Cold Appetizer	6	-	6	7	14	10	-	2
Hot Appetizer	4	13	15	8	24	14	15	3
Salad	-	4	3	2	7	4	3	-
Main Course	14	9	7	21	21	10	19	2
Side Dish	4	3	7	3	1	3	6	-
Dessert	3	4	2	16	9	5	5	2
Total Menu Items	42	40	101	82	119	69	48	21

Source: Created by the authors.

As shown in Table 4, ethnic menu items appear in hot appetizers, sushi and sashimi, and main courses. Among ethnic hot appetizers, Dim Sum stood out in R7, and Gyoza in R3 and R6. Sushi and sashimi diversity is particularly strong in R3, R4, R5, and R6; R2 and R7 offer no items in this category.

Table 4. Ethnic Dishes on the Menu of Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Ethnic Dishes on the Menu		Restaurant Code							
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Ethnic Dishes in Hot Apetizers	Gyoza	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-
	Dim Sum	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-
Sushi & Sashimi	Maki Roll	-	-	7	11	14	-	-	2
	Sushi Roll	11	-	26	-	1	7	-	5
	Nigiri	-	-	17	13	12	8	-	-
	Sashimi	-	-	11	1	15	8	-	5
Ethnic Dishes in Mains	Noodle	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Fried rice	-	1	-	1	-	4	-	-
	Kushiyaki	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
	Curries	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Robata	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-
	Teppenyaki	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-
Total Ethnic Food		11	8	69	38	47	28	4	12

Source: Created by the authors.

Table 4 also shows that the tasting menu is available only in R1, R6, and R8. The chef's choice (omakase) option is available in R3, R4, R5, and R6 and is preferred over the tasting menu. Signature dishes were prominent in R1, R4, R6, R7, and R8. This feature demonstrates that restaurants prioritize developing their unique dishes. Creativity in naming appears to be present only in R1 and R6. Examples include the beef tongue dish *"Dil-ight"* on R1's menu, and the fusion sushi options *"Brother from Another Mother"* and *"Perfect Storm"* on R6's menu.

Under the sub-theme of creativity displayed in the restaurant's menus, the study examined the experience setting and the wordplay used in naming menu items. Within the scope of experience setting, the study examined the restaurants' offerings of tasting menus, signature dishes, and chef's selections, known as omakase in Asian culinary culture, as well as the availability of food and beverage pairings. The relevant findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Menu Creativity in Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Menu Creativity		Restaurant Code							
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Experience Creation	Tasting Menu	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
	Chef's Selection	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Signature Dish	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	1
	Food and Beverage Pairing	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Creative Naming		3	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Total		**6**	**-**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**8**	**1**	**3**

Source: Created by the authors.

Another subtheme examined within the product theme, one of the 4P marketing mix elements, is the use of fusion cuisine in the menu. Table 6 presents the findings regarding the cuisines of the countries and the menu categories featured in the restaurants.

According to Table 6, Asian-American cuisine had the most intense fusion application. This was followed by Asian-European, Asian-Asian fusion, and Asian-Turkish cuisines. In terms of menu categories, fusion applications were particularly prominent in cold and hot appetizers. Salads, side dishes, sushi, and sashimi were limited. The main courses featured Asian-American and Asian-Turkish fusion. Asian-European fusion is especially prominent in cold appetizers and desserts, while the overall menu is limited.

Table 6. Fusion and Menu Category Distribution in Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Fusion Type		Menu Category							Total
		Cold Appetizer	Hot Appetizer	Salad	Sushi & Sashimi	Main Course	Side Dish	Dessert	
Asian American	Asian-American	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	20
	Chinese-American	-	9	-	-	-	-	1	
	Japanese-Mexican	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	
	Japanese-American	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	
Asian European	Japanese-French	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	12
	Japanese-Italian	5	-	-	-	1	-	2	
Asian Asian	Chinese-Thai	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	10
	Japanese-Chinese	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	Japanese-Peruvian	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Korean-Chinese	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
	Japanese-Vietnamese	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	Japanese-Korean	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
Asian Turkish		3	1	-	-	3	-	3	10
Total		**15**	**15**	**2**	**3**	**8**	**2**	**7**	**104**

Source: Created by the authors.

The Japanese-Peruvian influence on Asian-Asian fusion is noticeable in cold appetizers. The fusion of Asian-Turkish cuisines is prominent in appetizers and desserts. The activities under the main theme of promotion, one of the 4P marketing mix elements, were examined under four different sub-themes: storytelling, awards and ratings, social media content, and website content. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Promotional Activities of Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Promotion Activities		Restaurant Code							
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Storytelling	The Story of Ethnic Cuisine	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	The Chef's Story	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Awards or Ratings	Gault & Millau	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Michelin	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	İncili Gastronomy Guide	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	50 Best	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Wine Spectacular	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Social Media Content	Food	47	103	34	33	44	74	70	42
	Drinks	34	22	9	15	12	13	27	11
	Dining Hall	28	19	37	19	44	15	25	9
	Staff	39	14	1	8	21	27	1	27
	View	26	10	8	9	7	1	8	-
	Promotion	17	12	6	-	-	11	-	9
	Cooking Technique	19	-	-	-	-	8	-	21
	Special Event	11	3	2	7	3	-	1	7
	Ethnic Elements	24	7	13	-	29	-	40	9
Website Content	Food	38	13	-	1	9	7	24	-
	Drinks	21	4	1	1	1	1	7	-
	Dining Hall	3	6	5	1	3	3	20	-
	Staff	-	3	1	-	-	1	-	2
	View	3	-	-	-	2	-	6	-
	Promotion	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Cooking Technique	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Special Event	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ethnic Elements	5	3	2	-	-	2	18	-

Source: Created by the authors.

According to Table 7, most restaurants use ethnic cuisine stories, while only a few establishments feature the chef's story. Storytelling largely centers on culinary culture, whereas chef-focused narratives are less common. In terms of awards and ratings, R1 and R3 stand out in international guides, gaining visibility. On social media, R2 and R6 feature food visuals, while R1 shows greater content diversity than the other restaurants. R7 emphasized its cultural identity by heavily incorporating ethnic elements.

While R1 offers rich, balanced website content, R7 emphasizes the restaurant's cultural identity through ethnic elements. Restaurants actively use digital channels; however, only a few establishments have visible prestigious awards and rating systems.

Findings related to the main theme of place, one of the 4P marketing mix elements, were analyzed under the subthemes of location, ethnic elements in decoration, operating hours, and the presence of a reservation system, and are presented in Table 8. The location subtheme covers the restaurant's valet service, transportation options, and location information.

Table 8. Place Activities of Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Place Activities		Restaurant Code							
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Location	Valet service	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Transportation recommendations	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Location information	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ethnic Elements in Decoration		1	-	1		1	1	1	-
Operating Hours		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reservations		1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1

Source: Created by the authors.

According to Table 8, although all restaurants included location information, information on valet service and transportation options was limited. Ethnic culture was conveyed through elements such as Asian plants, sculptures, and the colour palette used in the dining room in restaurants coded R1, R3, R5, R6, and R7. No ethnic elements were found in the décor of R2 and R8. Clearly stating the operating hours of all restaurants facilitates customer planning and visits. Reservations are available at most restaurants, except R5.

Finally, the findings related to the main theme of price, one of the 4P marketing mix elements, were analyzed using the subthemes of price range and average price, considering the prices listed on menus. The average price for ordering one item from each menu was also calculated. The relevant findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Prices at Fine Dining Asian Restaurants

Category	Price (TL)	Restaurant Code					
		R1	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Cold Starter	Price Range	550 – 1.850	800 – 1.250	-	325 – 2.645		-
	Avg. Price	933	943	-	1.088		-
Hot Appetizer	Price Range	500 – 1.300	350 – 1.150	380 – 1.280	225 – 1.095	450– 2.600	390 – 1.900
	Avg. Price	838	565	592	602	1.147	793
Sushi & Sashimi	Price Range	730 – 2.700	180 – 2.500	415 – 770	195-1.665	550 – 2.850	-
	Avg. Price	1042	760	609	498	1.437	-
Salad	Price Range	-	1.157	-	-	-	780 – 2.450
	Avg. Price	-	500 – 1.820	-	-	-	1.627
Side Dish	Price Range	300	260 – 520	225 – 1.395	260 – 375	550 – 650	240 – 780
	Avg. Price	300	358	709	317	598	572
Main Course	Price Range	650 – 2200	950 – 2.200	575 - 5300	850 – 10.800	910 – 9.000	650 – 4.900
	Avg. Price	1.200	1.583	1.752	2.088 TL	1974	2.116
Dessert	Price Range	550-650	600 – 750	695 – 1.400	515 – 845	650 – 790	550 – 1.550
	Avg. Price	575	625	855	669	714	828
Average Price Per Person (TL)		**6.199**	**5.991**	**4.517**	**5.262**	**5.870**	**5.936**

Source: Created by the authors.

The findings in Table 9 indicate that the fine dining Asian restaurants studied adopted a similar pricing strategy. An examination of menu categories reveals that main courses are significantly more expensive than other categories, with items in the upper segment, particularly in R4 and R5, extending the price ranges. Prices for cold and hot appetizers are relatively balanced across restaurants; within the sushi & sashimi category, the average price of R6 is notably higher than the others. Side dishes and desserts were more affordable across all restaurants. An examination of average per-person prices shows that restaurants are largely positioned within similar ranges.

4.2 Discussion of the Data

Menu variety is an expected element for fine dining restaurant consumers (Antun & Gustafson, 2025; Johns, Edwards & Hartwell, 2013). In addition to fine dining consumers, menu variety is also a determinant of restaurant choice for ethnic restaurant consumers (Cevizkaya, 2015). Within the product theme, some restaurants offer more diverse menus, whereas others prefer more limited but experience-oriented options, such as tasting menus.

Studies also show that the most important factors influencing consumer satisfaction in fine dining restaurants are food quality and authenticity (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Harrington et al., 2012; Kandemir Altunel & Çifçi, 2021). Cevizkaya (2015) suggested that menu variety is a determining factor in consumers' ethnic restaurant choices. Therefore, for the restaurants examined, a tasting menu strategy focused on food quality or offering diverse menu options is appropriate. Liu and Mattila (2015) found that authentic menus positively affect customer experience and satisfaction in Asian ethnic restaurants.

Jang and Ha (2015) argue that as dish authenticity increases, positive emotions and satisfaction also increase. The presence of categories such as sushi, sashimi, gyoza, dim sum, noodles, and fried rice, as well as options like teppanyaki and robata, in the examined menus enriches consumers' Asian cuisine experience and strengthens the restaurant's ethnic emphasis. However, Ryu and Zhong (2012) contend that risk-taking behaviour affects consumers' menu-related decisions and can negatively influence post-purchase behaviour.

In other words, consumers tend to choose familiar items rather than trying an unfamiliar dish that may risk their experience; however, as a result, they miss out on an authentic experience. For the fine-dining ethnic restaurants at the center of this study, tasting menus, which introduce dishes in more detail, can be a strategic tool to eliminate this "safe yet less authentic" consumption zone.

However, Koufodontis and Gaki (2025) argue that for consumers, authenticity is shaped not by reality but by constructed narratives. At this point, it becomes questionable whether consumers truly miss an authentic experience. From the perspective that ethnic restaurant businesses are regarded as cultural ambassadors (Antón et al., 2019), the issue may not be that consumers miss the authentic experience, but that businesses fail to fulfill their cultural representation function.

Some argue that commodifying original culinary identity as a promotional gimmick causes cultural erosion (Balakrishnan Nair et al., 2020). However, these businesses are profit-oriented commercial structures. Businesses that fail to respond to consumers' wants and needs will struggle to sustain their presence in the market. Therefore, only businesses that can sustain their operations can fulfill the cultural representation function attributed to ethnic restaurants.

At the same time, responding to consumers' wants and needs should not mean a complete transformation of culinary identity. If businesses that use original culinary culture as capital move so far away from the culinary identity they claim to present that it becomes unrecognizable, they also risk losing this capital. For example, Figueiredo (2009) examined Italian restaurants in the city of Gramado and concluded that the authenticity of Italian food culture can be preserved through hybridization.

In this context, practices negotiated between cultural fidelity and market expectations are considered to be more beneficial and critically important for ethnic restaurants. As an indicator of this compromise, fusion cuisine practices also reflect creativity and innovativeness within the main product theme. Tambunan et al. (2019) argue that fusion practices in high-end ethnic restaurants are a strategic element for exoticizing the product and creating familiarity between the consumer and the dish. In addition, fusion cuisine provides a marketing advantage for food and beverage companies.

Moreover, creating original products and offering variety increases consumer satisfaction (Doğdubay, Girgin & Giritlioğlu, 2007). Liu et al. (2020) found that in high-priced ethnic restaurants, perceived chef talent increases visit intentions when seemingly incompatible cuisines are brought together through creative fusion strategies. In parallel, fusion dishes served as a means of differentiation in most of the restaurants examined. Conversely, Yang, Kim and Song (2025) contend that consumers perceive fusion dishes as low in authenticity, leading to lower purchase intention.

Their study revealed that moderately and highly iconic ethnic dishes significantly impact authenticity perception, and as authenticity increases, purchase intention increases. Fusion dishes, categorized as having low iconicity, had a more limited effect on authenticity. Özsoy et al. (2025) emphasize that authenticity perception is dynamic and subjective and propose that ethnic restaurants should define their target audience well and adopt an approach that preserves authenticity while allowing adaptation, such as fusion.

The fine-dining ethnic restaurants analyzed in this study showed fusion practices, mostly between Asian and American cuisines. As the literature highlights, menu planning should not overlook fusion's positive impact on consumer behaviour. However, fusion between Asian and Turkish cuisines remains limited in these Türkiye-based restaurants. Fusion applications using local ingredients may attract more local consumers and provide cost advantages for producers.

However, considering that authenticity perception directly affects purchase intention (Youn & Kim, 2017; Li, Yang & Lau, 2021; Yang et al., 2022), the influence of fusion practices on authenticity perceptions and, consequently, purchase intention must be carefully considered.

Ariyasriwatana (2022) stated that creativity is an important component of deliciousness, alongside authenticity and exoticism. In this study, creativity under the product subtheme was examined in terms of experience design and naming. In terms of experience design, tasting menus were offered in only a limited number of restaurants, whereas the omakase (chef's choice) was more common.

Research in the literature shows that, compared to certainty-based products, goods and services with uncertain elements that stimulate curiosity can be more effective at generating positive consumer behaviour (Sevilla & Meyer, 2020; Kovacheva, Nikolova & Lamberton, 2022; Buechel & Li, 2023). Omakase, in which the chef designs and selects the dishes, has become increasingly popular by incorporating an element of mystery. Studies also show that customers show higher tolerance for service failures in restaurants offering omakase (Liu & Li, 2025).

Yang and Chen (2022) found that the absence of consumer choice in tasting or omakase menus creates curiosity and a sense of scarcity, thereby increasing the desire to consume. In addition, this study suggests that tasting or omakase menus can serve as a highly satisfying marketing method because they create pleasure and surprise. The restaurants examined appear to use chef-driven creative experiences as a marketing strategy beyond the traditional tasting menus.

Arviv et al. (2024) also argue that menus can mitigate the threat of unfamiliar products by showcasing the chef's creativity and offering a deeper cultural experience, rather than drifting uncontrollably away from authenticity. Consumers in ethnic fine dining restaurants expect both cultural representation and a refined experience (Clemes et al., 2013). Including omakase, a practice originating in Asian cuisine, can be seen as a positive practice.

It preserves authenticity while allowing the chef's creativity and enhancing the dining experience, meeting the target customer's expectations. Signature dishes highlighted in most restaurants have also become an important element of chefs' attempts to reflect their culinary identity and differentiate themselves. Creativity in menu naming was found to be limited. This practice was observed only in R1 and R6 plots.

These restaurants used wordplay and creative naming methods, which gave their menus a distinctive character. Son (2022) stated that combining, reproducing, adding, and rotating components in culinary naming supports creativity. Wansink, Painter and Ittersum (2001) found in their experimental study that descriptive and creative food names attract consumer interest and increase demand. Budiasningrum et al. (2023) emphasized that in the highly competitive food and beverage industry, dish names can serve as a promotional tool and should therefore be appealing and persuasive.

From a marketing perspective, the restaurants in this study do not sufficiently use creative naming strategies. This may be because presenting ethnic dishes with their original names can create the perception that the food is authentic and genuine (Sinha et al., 2018). At the same time, however, naming dishes in ethnic restaurants may also help manage the fear or uncertainty that unfamiliarity can evoke (Youn & Kim, 2018). Therefore, creative naming may be a useful tool, particularly when fusion dishes are being offered.

Fusion cuisine practices also reflect creativity and innovation in the main product theme. All restaurants, except one, offered fusion dishes as a means of differentiation.

For fine dining restaurants, effectively using digital platforms is an important opportunity to increase visibility, influence consumer preferences, and expand market share (Cankül & Aktepe, 2022). Güner and Kale (2025) also noted that effective marketing communication increases curiosity about ethnic cuisines and stimulates the desire to experience them. The restaurants examined actively employed promotional strategies via social media.

However, the study identified limited content diversity, a lack of thematic coherence, and insufficient emphasis on ethnic elements on their websites. In terms of narrative promotion, most restaurants focused on the origins and cultural aspects of ethnic cuisine, but they covered chef stories only briefly. Narratives built around employees in foodservice operations make the dining experience more meaningful and influence consumer behaviour (Mossberg & Eide, 2018, p. 88).

The restaurants in the sample did not appear to have fully utilized personalized chef narratives. Rodrigues et al. (2023) found that creating a chef image positively affects consumers' hedonic experiences. Therefore, the restaurants in this study do not appear to benefit sufficiently from the potential advantages of chef-oriented digital storytelling. Award and rating systems offer international visibility and assure consumers that a certain quality standard has been met (Cumhur & Altaş, 2023). Thus, the limited presence of such elements on most restaurant websites and social media accounts was considered another shortcoming.

The analysis of the place element of the marketing mix revealed that all the restaurants shared their location information. However, many restaurants lacked valet services or transportation options. In a study of fine dining restaurants in Cappadocia, Yılmaz et al. (2024) found that consumers prioritize authenticity and interior design over restaurant atmosphere. Therefore, the absence of ethnic elements in some restaurants' decor indicates a missed opportunity to create an authentic atmosphere and enhance the customer experience.

Because transmitting culture through atmosphere is an important component that enriches the consumer experience in ethnic restaurants (Kala, 2020; Kim, Park & Xu, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2022), this is considered a deficiency for the restaurants studied.

Cankül, Kurt and Kızıltaş (2021) state that hedonic values are prioritized over price and food variety in ethnic restaurants. Taneri (2022, p. 137) argues that fine dining restaurants position themselves for a specific economic class and deliberately avoid being accessible to a wider audience through high prices. However, ethnic restaurants have higher costs than other restaurants due to imported or specialty ingredients (Başarangil & İnam, 2017; Gündoğdu, 2021).

Therefore, high pricing can be considered both a preferred and inevitable practice for ethnic fine dining restaurants. Nevertheless, despite targeting a specific segment, perceived value for money remains an important satisfaction factor for both ethnic and fine dining restaurant consumers (Kandemir Altunel & Çifçi, 2021; Yamaç Erdoğan, 2021). The similar average price levels observed in the examined restaurants suggest that competitive strategies shape pricing decisions.

However, menu structure and experience design are the main factors driving price differences. Experience-oriented options such as tasting menus and chef's choice increase prices, while restaurants offering greater menu variety aim to be more accessible. The analysis of menu categories revealed a wide price range, especially for main courses. This wide range suggests that while restaurants offer options for different budgets, they also create a prestigious experience in the upper segment with special dishes.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study examined the 4P marketing activities of ethnic fine dining restaurants through the lens of authenticity, analyzing and comparing restaurants' menus, social media content, and website content within the 4P marketing mix. The study investigated how these restaurants use and manage their product, promotion, place, and price elements in line with identity-based capital. The research suggests that ethnic representation is an important reason ethnic restaurants exist.

This is because these establishments do not merely serve food; they also make a culinary identity and the cultural meanings it represents visible. However, this representational function cannot be considered independently of the profit-oriented commercial nature of these businesses. A business that cannot sustain its market presence cannot fulfill its long-term role as a cultural representative.

Therefore, the central issue in the marketing of ethnic restaurants is to construct an experience and value proposition that remains in harmony with consumer wants and needs without completely transforming cultural identity. In other words, for ethnic fine dining restaurants, a sustainable marketing strategy should be shaped not at the extremes of full cultural fidelity or full adaptation, but within a balanced space of negotiation between cultural representation and market expectations. As a result, the study explains its theoretical and practical contributions in greater detail under the subheadings.

5.1 Practical Implications

Offering a wide selection of products is important for meeting consumer expectations. However, limited but experience-focused options, such as tasting menus or omakase, can also enhance a restaurant's image. Restaurants should balance variety and originality in their menus. Developing a fusion of Asian and Turkish cuisines presents a significant opportunity for restaurants operating in Türkiye. Innovative dishes made with local produce are recommended to offer cost advantages and build brand loyalty by creating an emotional connection with local consumers.

Another recommendation is to enhance the customer experience by creating a competitive advantage through creative menu naming and story-driven plate presentations. Creative elements, such as chef selection, signature dishes, and tasting menus, add prestige and originality to the menu. As part of the promotional mix, restaurants should maintain a strong social media presence and increase the variety of content on their website, emphasizing chef stories, awards, and honours.

Within the place mix, consider dining room decor to ensure it fits the location where the dishes are served. Fine-dining Asian restaurants should incorporate ethnic elements into their decor to emphasize the venue's unique identity and enrich the customer experience. Therefore, incorporating ethnic elements into the decor is recommended. Providing clear, easily accessible transportation recommendations on fine-dining Asian restaurants' websites will be beneficial because it simplifies travel planning and enhances the visitor experience.

Furthermore, including information about valet service, a key convenience feature, particularly in city centers or areas with limited parking, is recommended on the website, as it eliminates potential guests' uncertainty about transportation and strengthens the restaurant's perception of quality. While pricing targets high-end consumers, maintaining a balanced price-to-value ratio is crucial.

Ingredient quality, unique presentation, the overall experience, and perceived atmosphere should all support the price paid. Furthermore, including menu options that cater to different budgets can improve accessibility, allowing the restaurant to reach a wider audience while maintaining its position.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study makes a theoretical contribution by opening a conceptual discussion of how ethnic identity-based culinary elements are marketed in a fine dining context. In the research, product, promotion, place, and price were considered not only as functional components of the marketing mix but also as structures that present authentic elements of ethnic culinary culture in upscale ethnic restaurants. In this respect, the study's subthemes provided a conceptual framework for understanding the marketing of authenticity in ethnic fine dining restaurants.

The findings were discussed in light of the tensions that may arise when presenting and marketing authentic elements in ethnic fine dining restaurants. Nevertheless, the study has certain limitations. First, the research setting was limited to ethnic fine dining restaurants in Istanbul, Türkiye. For this reason, future research is recommended to include a range of cities and tourist destinations. In addition, future research should broaden the scope by comparing marketing mix activities across different destinations and identifying regional differences.

Another limitation is that the research data came from secondary sources such as menus, websites, and social media content. Although this approach enables a systematic examination of the marketing representations restaurants present in the public sphere, it does not directly reveal chefs' and restaurant managers' strategic marketing decisions or consumers' experiences.

Therefore, future studies that use primary data collection techniques, such as interviews or observation, and that address chef and manager perspectives alongside consumer experiences would contribute to the literature by strengthening the findings through triangulation. In addition, the use of secondary data enabled the research framework to be structured around the core elements of the traditional marketing mix.

Accordingly, primary data could also extend this framework by incorporating the service marketing mix dimensions of people, physical evidence, and process, further developing the theoretical perspective. Furthermore, future research may contribute to the literature by identifying consumers' perceptions of authenticity to define the current target audience better and by examining the relationships between these perceptions and various variables.

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CRediT author statement

Term	Definition	Author 1	A2	A3
Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims	x	x	
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models	x	x	x
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components	x		
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs	x	x	
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data	x	x	x
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection	x	x	
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools	x	x	
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse	x	x	
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)	x	x	x
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre-or post-publication stages	x	x	x
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation	x	x	x
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team	x	x	
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution		x	
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication	x	x	x

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