



## **THE IMPACT OF POPULAR CULTURE ON FOOD-RELATED BEHAVIOR**

**Aydan BEKAR** , Faculty of Tourism, Department of Food and Beverage Management, Mugla Sıtkı Koçman University, Mugla, Turkey

**Nisan YOZUKMAZ** , Faculty of Tourism, Department of Tourism Management, Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey

**Çisem KARAKULAK** , School of Social Sciences, Department of Tourism Management, Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University, Mugla, Turkey

### **Abstract**

Food and beverages are among the most important components of culture and thus, popular culture. It is important to learn about how popular culture affect people's behavior by all terms. This study aims to determine the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption and whether there is a difference in consumption behavior in terms of demographic variables. For this aim, a quantitative approach is adopted in this study. According to the results, it is found out that popular food and beverages are mostly preferred by young and single students with a middle or low income. In parallel with this result, it is observed that the most important aspect in preferring popular foods is their being more saturating. The main reasons of consumption are affordability and features related to the product. Female and/or single participants are more affected by popular culture then male and/or married participants in their food consumption behavior.

**Keywords:** Popular culture, food-related behavior, fast food, food and beverage consumption, food purchase behavior.

### **Introduction**

The concept of consumption is used in different ways in social research. For example, while psychologists often associate food consumption with “food intake” or what we eat, economists associate food consumption with the products we buy (Ashley, Hollows, Jones & Taylor 2004). However, such approaches can only picture a limited part of many factors that can influence food and beverage consumption. These approaches disregard cultural, social and

fiscal constraints that limit freedom of choice by equating the food we eat and the beverages we drink with our choices (Warde & Martens 1998; Ashley et al. 2004).

Food and beverages are a big part of popular culture and beliefs, practices and trends within that culture affect people's eating habits in a more direct way. Together with commercial, political, media and other systems, popular culture is formed by ideas and objects produced by a society. With popular culture, new trends have emerged in food and beverage consumption. Some of these trends are outside-consumerism, dining out, dietary or herbal products, food and beverages for specific target groups (dieters, women, athletes, the elderly etc.), ready-to-eat or frozen meals, ethnic food (Rodriguez 2018) and fast food. For example, according to Lusiana, Laksono & Hariri (2020), popular culture leads the formation of new identities through Japanese food consumption which also results with a new lifestyle called "Japanese lifestyling" (pp. 21).

Previous studies on popular culture have mostly focused on fashion (Akar 2009), music (Chambers 1985; Rowe 1996), cinema (Morris 2004; Sargent, Heatherton, Ahrens, Dalton, Tickle & Beach 2002), TV shows (Couldry 2001; Couldry & McCarthy 2004a; Grossberg 2006; Güllüoğlu 2012; Kim, Agrusa, Chon & Cho 2008), sports (Rowe 1996), politics (Siu 1989; Goren 2016; Street 1997) and leisure (Rowe 1996). Apart from fast food research, the topic of popular culture in relation to food and beverage consumption has not been studied enough. Thus, more studies like current study should be performed for contributing to the literature on food-related behavior. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption and to reveal whether the consumption differs according to demographic variables.

### **Popular Culture**

The term "popular" refers to generally accepted works that are appreciated by the majority of people. This can be many things like a dance style or a song (Mickunas 2017). According to Storey (2018), the definition of popular culture is open to discussion, because it has always been defined explicitly and implicitly compared to other conceptual categories. In general, it is defined as mass culture that is created and enjoyed by people. According to Mickunas (2017), popular culture is the opposite of "high culture" that "elite minorities" have. Because the popular generally reflects the general taste of the lower and middle classes, as opposed to the sophisticated class whose tastes form a more formal and refined culture. Grossberg (2006) defines popular culture as the culture that appeals to a large audience that cannot be defined by a single socio-demographic variable such as class or gender, regardless of where and by whom it is produced. Browne (1973) describes popular culture as all life elements that are not purely intellectual or elitist and also not completely spread by mass media tools and states that popular culture consists of spoken and printed words,

sounds, pictures, objects and works, and in this context, it embraces all layers of society and culture that are “mass”, “popular” and “public” except the elite class. In this sense, popular culture that belong to the people has characteristics of mass society as an element that is attributed to the masses in the process of mass society (Akar 2009). Fiske (1999) regards popular culture as a phenomenon that includes both the possibility of social change and the impulses to maintain this change within energy and vitality of human evidence. In short, popular culture is defined as the dominant culture in a certain period of a society (Sözen 2006) or a culture of use and consumption (Erdoğan 1999).

According to Bektaş (1996), popular culture represents the cultural elements of the public that are observed in all kinds of production forms in which urban life exists. It includes different elements such as football teams, religious holidays, pop music, blue jeans, arabesque and Coca-Cola. The common features of these elements are that they cover activities outside of work life and are intended to entertain people. Popular culture does not aim to provide useful information or to educate people; its main purpose is to make people have a good time. It is a widely accepted approach that popular culture is the culture of everyday life brought by modernization; it helps to get rid of negative aspects of reality and creates artificial happiness. Nevertheless, it is an undeniable fact that it arises from common needs of a society (Batmaz 1981).

After World War II, the meaning of popular culture has begun to change with mass culture, media culture, image culture and consumption culture and be seen as “the product of mass consumption”. It is inevitable for popular culture to turn to mass culture for “anonymous” audiences. Nonetheless, general popular culture has become a part of consumption for consumers. This trend has been named as “culture industry” by Frankfurt School. Thinkers of Frankfurt School claim that popular culture is a factory producing standardized products. Popular culture reflects not “the original” but “the imitated”. In other words, it does not represent anything. On the contrary, it just represents mass media culture (Mickunas 2017). One of the most frequently mentioned concepts in defining popular culture is mass media (Milestone & Meyer 2020). According to Grossberg (2006), since the beginning of 20th century, new communication technologies have become the main sources of popular culture. They have mediated not only the expansion and distribution of popular culture, but also its formation. Popular culture is thought to consist of “mainstream” ideas, attitudes, images, rituals spread by various media outlets. This thought is supported with globalization which has been highlighted by Western countries for the aim of creating “a more homogenized world order”. There is also a connotation of popular culture such as “mass appeal” displayed by different media such as advertisements, movies and television (Mickunas 2017).

As mentioned above, one of the most important tools that feed and spread popular culture is mass media. Before mass media have become so widespread, it was observed that people looked out for their local cultures more.

According to Güllüoğlu (2012), continuous and unconscious consumption has started with the influence of the media. The individuals who are exposed to visual media that is an important element of mass media, are affected by what they see or hear in the media. What media displays as “trendy”, “attractive”, or “sensational” becomes the perception of the audience. Similarly, the behaviors and emotions displayed on a television screen by a charismatic actor are also embraced and imitated by viewers who want to define their ideal self with their favorite television star. Although it does not change the situation whether these emotions or behaviors are romantic or violent, positive or negative, many psychology studies show that people adopt their attitudes and behaviors through visual media at a very early age. These attitudes and behaviors continue to exist in the individual (Sargent et al. 2002) and are even strengthened by mass media (Couldry 2001; Couldry & McCarthy 2004a; 2004b).

Popular culture is a concept that has penetrated into contemporary society. It is the center of consumerism that feeds social media today. Although it is attributed to Western societies, there is no limit that it cannot reach with globalization (Harvey 1989; Storey 2018), and its effects have continued to be felt in every field. In recent years the impact of mass media has been adopted by social media which has become a part of almost every individual’s life. And this also has affected the food-related behavior of consumers.

### **Food and Beverage Consumption and Popular Culture**

According to Warde (1997), the consumption of food and beverages is universal, usual and very valuable. Every human being eats; although many people have several meals a day without even thinking about eating, this activity is holistically linked to many significant factors of life. In this regard, food and beverages are different from other fields that are used to explain consumption. Cultural studies generally focus on purchases that include symbols such as cars and clothing. Similar symbols are actually found in food and beverage industry. Many food and beverage related activities are private or family activities. It deals with physical and emotional needs and is an important element of family formation. It can also take up more space in families’ budgets than clothing and entertainment. For this reason, food and beverage consumption is an element that regulates the aspects that strengthen identity and symbolize status.

Regardless of a society’s economic system, food and beverages have always been a part of a symbolic system that conveys cultural messages. Food and beverages are specific indicators that makes modern social life comprehensible. For example, with whom and where, at what time of day and what we eat is affected by many different variables such as sex, age, social status and income level (Finkelstein 2003). Bell and Valentine (1997) state that every meal we eat gives information about our personality and our place in the world.

The impact of food and beverages on popular culture has increased as chefs have become famous and cooking has moved away from its traditional

meaning through media and become one of the main subjects of TV shows. The impact of popular food and beverage culture on public policy has also increased as well as its use as a substantial tool to reflect cultural values and ideologies (LeBesco & Naccarato 2018).

According to Finkelstein (2003), the history of dining is one of the mechanisms of constant adaptation to new food and beverages and new cooking techniques. The flavors of food and beverages and cuisines are not static. For example, tomatoes, hot peppers and chili pepper have a dynamic past. Although they seem like ordinary ingredients in our diet now, they are indeed recent European discoveries. The same is true for Asian flavors such as coconut milk, bean sprouts, water chestnut and coriander. The integration of a cuisine occurs as a result of the interaction of many different social factors such as creativity, nostalgia and commercial pressures. Today one of the most significant social factors in this regard is popular culture. Health, self-care and pursuit of eternal youth have become personal goals because modern Western societies praise and promote youth and slimness in popular culture. Thousands of products are produced to assist people in their struggle to stay young and thin with commercial concerns. Highly recommended products such as supplements, dietary products or herbal extracts have become strong aspects of cultural pressures for individuals to follow this trend. Especially young people are more likely to follow the latest food and beverage trends (Fieldhouse 2013).

Necessity, pleasure, social distinction, opportunities and values intersect at dinner tables; these factors determine who will sit where at the table, what will be on the plate or whether there will be a plate, who will prepare and serve dishes. However, food and beverages are stronger indicators in situations which are repeated on daily basis. In Western societies, everyone can recognize social indicators of whether a family normally eats caviar, hot dogs or frozen foods (Grew 2018). In this context, the French sociologist Luce Giard regards cooking as a form of popular culture. This point of view is a potentially useful basis for developing food and beverage consumption within cultural studies. Culturally, Giard argues that there is a difference between “authentic” popular culture produced within traditional cultures of women and inauthentic popular culture which is mass and industrial, not produced by people but for people (Hall 1981; Bennett 1981). To recognize different and important social functions complemented by food and beverages requires considering the consequences when these functions change or deteriorate. For example, when food and beverages are universally available, homogenized and packaged, they may lose the possibility of symbolizing different social identities. Rather, they constitute social meanings that are tailored to society and to serve successful advertising campaigns, in other words, commercial concerns that have created the Pepsi generation, the Benetton tribe and McDonald’s family. Such connections and affiliations lead to a new understanding of identity offered by global marketing campaigns that have been estranged from local and unique influences and are

actually developed in very different locations from where consumers live (Finkelstein 2003).

Food and beverages are also known to represent temporary personal qualities such as cosmopolitanism and conservatism. While customized products such as squid, oysters, and tuna carry a different message, burgers and French fries may represent the opposite. According to Yılmaz & Bekar (2019), popular culture products' being in sight much is one of the most important factors affecting consumer preference. Some food and beverages described as traditional culture products fall behind in the competition with popular food and beverage products of this globalized world. Foods such as "pide", "lahmacun" and beverages as "sherbet" which are unique to Turkish culture have started to be replaced by popular culture products such as waffle, pizza and latte recently. According to Sakallı (2014), popular culture causes people all over the world to forget their own cultures, enjoy what is offered to them, take pleasure from it and act accordingly and eventually makes national values to be forgotten.

Of all sociocultural by-products, only a few have touched our lives as much as the relationship between popular culture and food and beverages. Because while we are exposed to popular culture every day, we also have to eat every day. This relationship creates brands and transfers the fundamentals of culinary education to consumers every day (Reum 2011). Öztürk (2014) describes the relationship between food and beverages and popular culture through fast food. He states that fast-food, which is the basic consumption style of the industrialized societies (Crothers 2021), has become more widespread with globalization process; this consumption style preferred to save time has become a part of social culture over time and fast-food consumption style has negatively affected many family functions.

In line with this conceptual framework, the study questions are listed as below:

- (1) How much does popular culture affect consumers' food-related behavior?
- (2) How frequently are popular food and beverages consumed? And which popular foods and beverages are consumed mostly?
- (3) Does the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption differ by demographic characteristics of consumers?
- (4) What are the factors that affect the consumer preference of popular food and beverages?
- (5) Do these factors affecting the preference of popular food and beverages differ by demographic characteristics of consumers?

The study is shaped with regard to these questions. All answers are explained in findings and conclusion parts.

### **Methodology**

The sample of this study which was conducted to determine the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption and whether consumption differs by demographic variables was 391 consumers over the age of 15 living in Mugla province, Turkey. The data of this quantitative study were collected with a questionnaire during customers' visits to food and beverage enterprises. The scales applied in questionnaire were prepared by the authors after a comprehensive literature review (Hall 1981; Bennett 1981; Finkelstein 2003; Warde 1997, Rodriguez 2018; Yılmaz & Bekar 2019). The questionnaire form consisted of 3 parts. In the first part, close-ended questions regarding demographic characteristics (age, sex, education level, monthly personal income, occupation and marital status) were asked. In the second section, the preference for popular culture foods and in the third part the reasons for this preference were measured with 5-point Likert type scaling. Before survey study, expert opinions were taken and then required revisions or additions were made by conducting a preliminary study with 20 participants. The collected data were transferred to statistical analysis software and before proceeding to analyses, extreme value analysis, item analysis, reliability analysis and validity analysis were performed. The item total correlation value and Cronbach's alpha value of the scales were examined. The obtained findings showed that total correlation value of each item was above 0,30 and the internal consistency coefficient was 0,905 (20 items about reasons for preference of popular culture food and beverages). The construct validity was determined by exploratory factor analysis. One item was omitted as it had a variance below 0,30 and four items were omitted due to the fact that the difference between their factor load values in two factors was less than 0,10 in the first factor analysis. Then a new factor analysis was performed. Finally, 15 items were grouped under 4 factors. As a result of analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was 0,893, Bartlett's test of sphericity was  $p < 0,01$ ;  $X^2 = 2746,135$ ;  $df: 105$ ; disclosure rate of total variance was 66,350. The finding that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was above 0,8 showed that the sample size was sufficient (Hutcheson & Sofroniou 1999); and Bartlett's test of sphericity values were significant ( $p < 0,01$ ) showed that data set had a normal distribution with multiple variables and there was a high correlation between variables (Seçer 2018; Kalaycı 2014). The factors were named as "Psychosocial impacts", "Spatial features", "Product features", and "Affordability" (See Table 1).

In the phase of data analysis, percentage and frequency values were used for demographic information and frequencies of consumption of consumers' popular culture food and beverages. Student's t test and One-Way ANOVA were used to compare the reasons for preferring popular culture foods in terms of demographic characteristics. In addition, Tukey test was applied to determine which groups caused the difference in groups in which there was a difference as a result of variance analysis. In statistical analysis,  $p < 0.05$  was accepted as the level of significance.

**Table 1.** Factor Analysis

Factors	Items	Factors			
		1	2	3	4
Psychosocial impacts	I feel more sophisticated	,832			
	I feel more popular	,814			
	I feel more modern	,801			
	I am influenced by my circle of friends, relatives	,624			
Spatial features	The places where they are served are suitable for conversation		,752		
	The places where they are served are crowded		,731		
	I am influenced by advertisements		,692		
Product features	They are delicious			,756	
	They are inexpensive			,652	
	They look good			,629	
	I feel they are worth the price			,580	
	I think they are more hygienic			,563	
Affordability	They are promotional products				,723
	They are ready in a short time				,712
	Their portion sizes are large				,612
	<i>Explained variance by factors</i>	19,753	16,491	15,884	14,223
	<i>Total variance</i>				66,350
	<i>Cronbach's Alpha value of the Scale</i>				0,896
	<i>Cronbach's Alpha values of the factors</i>	0,878	0,791	0,767	0,704

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin= 0,893,  $p < 0,001$ , X<sup>2</sup>: 2746,135, df: 105

### Findings

Nearly half of the participants were male; 74,7% were at the age of 34 years or under; more than half (60,1%) had a associate or bachelor's degree.

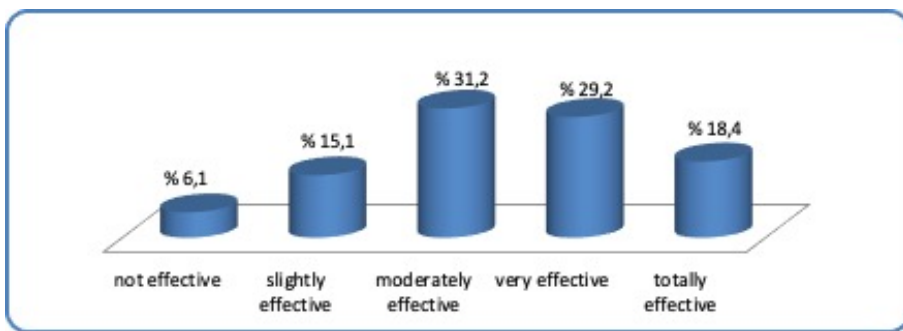


Considering their marital status, it was seen that 73,4% were single. The rate of participants who had an income level of 2400 TL or under were 43,2%. Nearly 40% of the participants were students; 22,5% were public employees and 25,3% were working at private sector.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

<b>Sex</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	21	55,	Married	10	26,
	5	0		4	6
Male	17	45,	Single	28	73,
	6	0		7	4
<b>Age (Years)</b>			<b>Monthly Income</b>		
24 and below	12	33,	2400 & ↓	16	43,
	9	0		9	2
25-34	16	41,	2401-3900	99	25,
	3	7			3
35-44	66	16,	3901-4900	78	19,
		9			9
45-54	25	6,4	4901-5900	41	10,
					5
55 and above	8	2,0	5901 & ↑	4	1,0
<b>Education Level</b>			<b>Occupation</b>		
Elementary school	20	5,1	Government employee	88	22,
					5
High school	73	18,	Private sector	99	25,
		7			3
Associate/ Bachelor degree	23	60,	Retired	15	3,8
	5	1			
Master/PhD degree	63	16,	Not working	26	6,6
		1			
			Student	16	41,
				3	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>100</b>

The participants were asked “How effective is popular culture on your food and beverage consumption?” and their answers are presented at the figure below.



**Figure 1.** The participants’ answers for the effectiveness of popular culture on their food and beverage consumption

According to the distribution of their answers, 6,1% were not affected by popular culture in their food and beverage consumption; 18,4% thought that popular culture was totally effective in their food and beverage consumption. The rate of participants who considered popular culture as slightly effective was 15,1%; as moderately effective was 31,2% and as very effective was 29,2%. The mean level of impact of popular culture on their food and beverage consumption was  $3,38 \pm 1,13$ .

Table 3 shows the frequencies of consumption of some food and beverages that are recognized as popular culture products.

**Table 3.** The frequencies of consumption of some food and beverages that are recognized as popular culture products by the participants

Popular food and beverages	Every day	A couple of times a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A couple of times a year	Never	Mean±SD
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Burger	2,0	18,4	25,6	28,1	16,4	9,5	2,36±1,26
Pizza	2,0	16,9	26,3	33,2	16,4	5,1	2,39±1,15
Sandwich	9,7	17,4	33,0	22,8	11,0	6,1	2,73±1,31
Pasta	1,8	23,8	36,1	32,0	4,3	2,0	2,80±0,97
Sushi	-	-	-	4,9	19,4	75,7	0,46±0,86
Waffle	0,3	7,2	20,2	31,2	23,3	17,9	1,76±1,18
Tiramisu, profiterole, pudding etc.	1,3	14,6	27,1	32,2	15,9	9,0	2,26±1,19
Macaron	0,3	4,1	6,1	12,5	22,5	54,5	0,83±1,14

Donut	-	2,0	4,3	9,0	28,1	56,5	0,67±0,95
Croissant	2,6	6,9	16,1	22,3	21,2	30,9	1,54±1,38
Cappuc- cino, es- presso latte etc.	16,4	23,5	22,0	15,3	9,0	13,8	2,81±1,61
Milkshake, frappe etc.	2,3	9,2	11,5	30,2	23,3	23,5	1,66±1,32

Sushi, donut, croissant and waffle were the least consumed foods, milkshake, frappe etc. were the least consumed beverages by the participants. While pasta was the most consumed food, the most consumed beverages were cappuccino, espresso, latte etc.

It was assumed that levels of being influenced by popular culture in food and beverage consumption differed by demographic characteristics of the participants. The tests of difference run with this regard were presented at Tables 4 & 5.

**Table 4.** The Comparison of the Impact of Popular culture on food and beverage consumption in terms of Demographic Characteristics of Participants (The Results of one-way ANOVA)

	Demographics	n	mean	SD	F	p
The impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption	24 and under	129	3,57	1,05	3,863 (1-5)	,004*
	25 - 34	163	3,42	1,14		
	35 - 44	66	3,16	1,06		
	45 - 54	25	3,04	1,17		
	55 and above	8	2,37	1,50		
The impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption	Elementary	20	3,60	1,35	3,823 (2-3) (2-4)	,010*
	High school	73	3,73	1,05		
	Associate or bachelor's	235	3,31	1,12		
	Master/PhD	63	3,15	1,08		
The impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption	2400 and ↓	169	3,49	1,11	7,281	,000*
	2401-3900	99	3,60	1,14		
	3901-4900	78	3,23	1,10		
	4901 and ↑	45	2,75	,98		
The impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption	Government employee	88	3,02	1,17	6,517 (1-4) (1-5) (2-4)	,000*
	Private sector	99	3,25	1,08		
	Retired	15	3,00	1,46		
	Not working	26	3,92	,93		
	Student	163	3,61	1,05		

$p < 0,05$

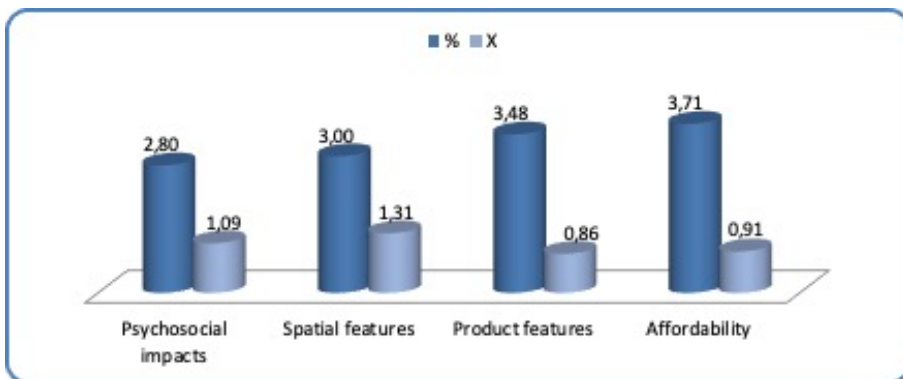
The results presented at the table above confirm the definition of popular culture (Grossberg 2006) as a culture that appeals to a wider audience and cannot be attributed to a single sociodemographic variable such as class or gender. In the current study, the impact of popular culture on participants' food and beverage consumption was observed in all of the demographic variables. However, it was noteworthy that the level of impact was higher in some groups and statistically significant than other groups. When the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption was compared in terms of age of the participants, it was deduced that young participants were more affected by popular culture and the level of impact decreased in groups of older participants ( $p < 0,05$ ). With regard to education level, high school graduates had the highest mean level and they were followed by the participants with primary education, the ones with an associate or bachelor's degree and the ones with a degree of master's or PhD. The results of Tukey test showed that the difference was between high school graduates and the ones with a higher education degree. As for income levels of the participants, as their income level increased, their level of being affected by popular culture decreased. Nevertheless, it was observed that in the group of participants with a low- or middle-income level, the results were higher than the mean values and in the group of participants with an income level of 4901 TL and above, the mean value was  $2,75 \pm 0,98$ . The comparison in occupation groups resulted in that the impact levels of students or the participants who had not been working were higher than other groups. They were followed by private sector employees and government employees. The statistically significant difference was between government employees and students or the ones that had not been working and between private sector employees and the ones that had not been working.

Table 5 presents that the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption was higher in female participants and in single participants. In comparison in terms of the demographic characteristics, the results confirmed each other.

**Table 5.** The Comparison of the Impact of Popular culture on food and beverage consumption in terms of gender and marital status of Participants (The Results of t-test)

Factors	Groups	n	mean	SD	t test		
					t	SD	p
The impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption	Female	215	3,48	1,05	1,957	351,31	0,051*
	Male	176	3,26	1,20			
	Married	104	2,97	1,20	-	389	0,000*
	Single	287	3,53	1,06			

$p < 0,05$



**Figure 2.** The Factors Affecting Food and Beverage Consumption

The reasons for being affected by popular culture were grouped under four factors in terms of the results of factor analysis applied and named in accordance with the items (See Table 1). The reasons for the consumers’ being affected by popular culture based on these factors were shown at Figure 2 which suggested that the most important reason why the participants were affected by popular culture was affordability (3,71±0,91). While product features had impact above average (3,48±0,86), that factor was followed by spatial features and psychosocial impacts.

It was assumed that the reasons for consumption of popular food and beverages varied by demographic variables. The results of comparison tests conducted in line with study problems are presented at the table below.

**Table 6.** The reasons for preference of popular food and beverages in terms of gender

Factors	Groups	n	mean	SD	t test		
					t	SD	p
Psychosocial impacts	Female	215	2,82	1,09	0,48	389	0,63
	Male	176	2,77	1,09			
Spatial features	Female	215	3,10	1,12	1,90	389	0,58
	Male	176	2,88	1,12			
Product features	Female	215	3,57	,80	2,299	389	0,22
	Male	176	3,37	,91			
Affordability	Female	215	3,74	,89	0,756	389	0,44
	Male	176	3,67	,93			

p<0,05

It was deduced that female participants were more affected by popular culture than male participants in terms of all factors. Although there was not found any statistically significant difference, it was possible to say that female

participants were more affected than male participants in terms of psychosocial impacts, spatial features, product features and affordability respectively ( $p > 0,05$ ).

**Table 7.** The reasons for preference popular food and beverages in terms of Age

Factors	Age	n	mean	SD	F	p
Psychosocial impacts	24 and under	129	2,91	1,20	1,645	,630
	25 - 34	163	2,72	1,05		
	35 - 44	66	2,77	1,09		
	45 - 54	25	2,88	,79		
	55 - 64	8	2,68	,92		
Spatial features	24 and under	129	2,94	1,17	1,436	,782
	25 - 34	163	2,99	1,13		
	35 - 44	66	3,05	1,10		
	45 - 54	25	3,25	1,08		
	55 - 64	8	2,95	,74		
Product features	24 and under	129	3,54	,82	1,207	,307
	25 - 34	163	3,47	,88		
	35 - 44	66	3,49	,88		
	45 - 54	25	3,40	,76		
	55 - 64	8	2,87	1,01		
Affordability	24 and under	129	3,82	,85	1,938	,103
	25 - 34	163	3,69	,94		
	35 - 44	66	3,65	,87		
	45 - 54	25	3,72	,98		
	55 - 64	8	2,95	1,18		

$p < 0,05$

The participants under the age of 24 were more affected by psychosocial impacts and product features in their preference of consuming popular food and beverages than other age groups. The group of the participants whose age was between 35-44 had a higher level of being affected by spatial features. The affordability factor was a significant factor in the preferences of popular food and beverages by the young and middle-aged participants. Although there was not any statistically significant difference in the comparison by age, it could be claimed according to mean values that especially young and middle-aged participants preferred popular food and beverages for different reasons than other age groups.

**Table 8.** The reasons for preference of popular food and beverages in terms of Marital Status

Factors	Groups	n	mean	SD	t test
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					t	SD	p
Psychosocial impacts	Married	104	2,77	1,05	-,310	389	,756
	Single	287	2,81	1,10			
Spatial features	Married	104	2,98	1,15	-,162	389	,872
	Single	287	3,00	1,12			
Product features	Married	104	3,29	,90	-2,601	389	<b>,010*</b>
	Single	287	3,55	,84			
Affordability	Married	104	3,47	1,03	-3,231	156,1	<b>,001*</b>
	Single	287	3,80	,85			

\*p<0,05

When the impact of marital status on the reasons why consumers preferred popular food and beverages was examined, it was observed that the mean values of single participants were higher than those of married participants. While the mean value for being affected by product features was  $3,29 \pm 0,90$  in the group of married participants, it was  $3,55 \pm 0,84$  in the group of single participants. As for affordability factor, the mean value was  $3,47 \pm 1,03$  in the group of married participants and  $3,80 \pm 0,85$  in the group of single participants. These were statistically significant differences ( $p < 0,05$ ). Even though being affected by psychosocial impacts and spatial features had a higher mean value in the group of single participants, the difference between groups was not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ).

**Table 9.** The reasons for preference of popular food and beverages in terms of Income Level

Factors	Income level	n	mean	SD	F	p
Psychosocial impacts	2400 & ↓	169	2,86	1,17	2,234	,084
	2401-3900	99	2,93	,96		
	3901-4900	78	2,68	1,10		
	4901 & ↑	45	2,48	,96		
Spatial features	2400 & ↓	169	2,80	1,09	2,397	,068
	2401-3900	99	2,87	1,12		
	3901-4900	78	3,20	1,11		
	4901 & ↑	45	3,11	1,22		
Product features	2400 & ↓	169	2,82	,96	2,718 (2-4)	<b>,044*</b>
	2401-3900	99	3,00	1,13		
	3901-4900	78	3,51	,88		
	4901 & ↑	45	3,58	,77		
Affordability	2400 & ↓	169	3,49	,88	2,345	,073
	2401-3900	99	3,15	,87		
	3901-4900	78	3,48	,86		

	4901 & ↑	45	3,80	,90		
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\*p<0,05 (2400 & ↓:1, 2401-3900:2, 3901-4900: 3, 4901 & ↑:4)

When it was examined whether the reasons why consumers preferred popular food and beverages differed by their income levels, it was found that the mean values increased in parallel with the increase in income level of participants in terms of the product features factor and there was a statistically significant difference. With regard to psychosocial impacts (feeling more sophisticated, feeling more popular, feeling more modern etc.) it was observed that the mean values decreased in parallel to the increase in income level.

**Table 10.** The reasons for preference of popular food and beverages in terms of Education Level

Factors	Educational Level	n	mean	SD	F	p
Psychosocial impacts	Primary	20	2,73	1,02	11,367 (2-4) (3-4)	,000*
	High school	73	3,35	1,12		
	Associate & Bachelor's	235	2,77	1,00		
	Master's & PhD	63	2,31	1,14		
Spatial features	Primary	20	2,83	1,35	13,116	,000*
	High school	73	3,47	,89		
	Associate & Bachelor's	235	3,05	1,11		
	Master's & PhD	63	2,32	1,08		
Product features	Primary	20	3,23	,90	5,191 (1-4) (2-3.4) (3-4)	,002*
	High school	73	3,72	,79		
	Associate & Bachelor's	235	3,51	,84		
	Master's & PhD	63	3,19	,92		
Affordability	Primary	20	3,21	1,17	5,818	,001*
	High school	73	3,95	,83		
	Associate & Bachelor's	235	3,75	,84		
	Master's & PhD	63	3,44	1,05		

\*p<0,05 (primary 1, high school 2, associate/bachelor 3, master & PhD 4)

Table 10 shows that the group of participants with a high school education was the group with the highest mean values in terms of all four factors. It was noteworthy that in terms of psychosocial impacts, the mean values of the participants with an associate or bachelor degree were the lowest values. The statistically significant differences were between the participants with a master or PhD degree and the participants with a high school education or the ones with an associate/bachelor degree. While the mean values of the factor product features were higher than the mean values in all of the groups, the lowest mean



value was found in the group of the participants with master/PhD degree and the highest mean value was in the group of the participants with high school education. As a result of Tukey test, the difference was between the group of the graduate participants and other groups. Although the difference was found significant in terms of affordability and spatial features, it could not be determined which groups caused the difference. Overall, in terms of all four factors, the mean values of the participants with high school degree and associate/bachelor degree were higher.

**Table 11.** The reasons for consumers’ preference of popular food and beverages in terms of Occupations

Factors	Occupation	n	mean	SD	F	p
Psychosocial impacts	Government employee	88	2,59	1,07	1,744	,140
	Private sector	99	2,87	,99		
	Retired	15	2,53	,87		
	Not working	26	3,10	,93		
	Student	163	2,85	1,18		
Spatial features	Government employee	88	2,95	1,18	2,463	,045*
	Private sector	99	3,16	1,06		
	Retired	15	2,97	,64		
	Not working	26	3,48	,87		
	Student	163	2,85	1,18		
Product features	Government employee	88	3,33	,87	2,117	,078
	Private sector	99	3,45	,81		
	Retired	15	3,17	,90		
	Not working	26	3,68	,62		
	Student	163	3,58	,89		
Affordability	Government employee	88	3,50	,93	3,582 (1-5)	,007*
	Private sector	99	3,58	,97		
	Retired	15	3,75	,97		
	Not working	26	4,02	,77		
	Student	163	3,86	,85		

\*p<0,05 (government employee 1, private sector employee 2, retired 3, not working 4, student 5)

In terms of the affordability factor, the mean values within the groups of the participants who were not working or were students were higher than those in other groups. In terms of spatial features, the mean values of the students were lower than those in other groups. In both of these factors, the occupations of the participants revealed a statistically significant difference in reasons for preference (p<0,05). As a result of Tukey test, in terms of the affordability factor, the difference was between the groups of government employees and students. In

terms of spatial features, although the difference was found significant, the groups that caused the difference could not be determined. In terms of product features, the mean values were higher than those in others for all occupation groups ( $P>0,05$ ).

### **Results and Discussion**

Popular culture which is defined as mass culture created by people and liked by many people (Storey 2018) has reached every segment in population with mass media and has become an important part of consumption. Consumers have unwittingly made popular culture permanent and integrated it into their lifestyles (Yılmaz & Bekar 2019). One of the significant areas influenced by popular culture is food-related behavior of people. This study is conducted with 391 consumers to determine the impact of popular culture on food and beverage consumption and food-related behavior and whether this consumption behavior differs by demographic variables.

The majority of the participants of this research are young, single and have low or middle personal income. Almost half of them are students. In terms of gender, the distribution is nearly equal. According to the obtained results, the vast majority of the participants are affected by popular culture in food and beverage consumption at different levels. It is seen that almost more than half of the participants are affected by popular culture in their food and beverage consumption.

In this study, the most preferred foods are found as pizza, burgers, pasta, sandwich etc. which are saturating and the most preferred beverages are found as cappuccino, espresso, latte etc. As almost half of the participants were students, it was understandable why the consumption frequency of foods such as burger, pizza, sandwich which were more saturating and relatively more affordable was higher than other foods.

The level of being affected is higher in female participants in terms of gender; in singles in terms of marital status; in young participants in terms of age and in students or in the participants who are not working in terms of occupation. It could be According to Love (1972) young people and families with children visit fast-food businesses more than other groups. In line with this suggestion, in the current study, it can be claimed that popular culture had more influence over young people.

In addition, it is seen that popular culture is more effective in each occupation groups than other demographic variables and the level of being affected decreases as the income level of participants increases. However, Akbay, Tiryaki & Gul (2007) find out that as household income increases, fast-food consumption increases too. In their study on the consumption of fast food which has become a part of social culture over time, Kayışoğlu & İçöz (2012) claim that as the level of education of consumers increases, the consumption rate of fast-food decreases. This study reveals a similar result.

The reasons for preferring popular food and beverages are affordability, product features, spatial features of the places where these foods are served and psychosocial impacts respectively. As for the determinants of fast-food consumption, Dunn, Mohr, Wilson & Wittert (2011) suggest convenience, social conscience, satisfaction and health in terms of behavioral beliefs and claim that consumer demands for food and beverages that are delicious, satisfying and convenient are high.

In terms of demographic variables, when consumption reasons are compared, female participants are more likely to consume popular food and beverages by being affected by these factors than male participants. In terms of marital status, single participants prefer popular food and beverages than married participants and especially affordability and product features are effective in this preference. In terms of age, younger participants are affected by affordability and product features at most in preference of popular food and beverages. The participants who are at the ages between 34-54 are affected by spatial features more than other age groups. In terms of spatial features, product features and affordability factors, as the levels of education and income of the participants increase, the mean values increase. And the mean values in terms of psychosocial impacts are higher in the groups of participants with lower education and income levels. Considering consumption behaviors and reasons with regard to demographic variables, the results are similar with each other.

Food and beverage enterprises operating in the province where this study is conducted are mostly located around university campus. Thus, during the data collection process, it is seen that the majority of participants are mostly university students. Besides being a limit for this study, it is understandable that affordability and product features have higher mean values in young, single and student participants.

Future research can focus on the relationship between social media and food-related behavior. It is also significant to learn more about the impact of visual social media on food and beverage consumption and food consumer preferences. With regard to food and beverage industry, business managers may follow popular trends but also may integrate popular food and beverages with local tastes. They may create a difference and gain a competitive advantage in especially young consumer market. Thus they can preserve local or national values and at the same time adopt world trends.

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