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This Study Examines the Relationship Between Perceived Authenticity, Green Consumerism, and Behavioral Intention Within the Context of Heritage Restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia. By Integrating Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT) and the Stimulus-Organism-Re

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Article

From Authenticity to Sustainability: The Role of Authentic Cultural and Consumer Knowledge in Shaping Green Consumerism and Behavioral Intention to Gastronomy in Heritage Restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between perceived authenticity, green consumerism, and behavioral intention within the context of heritage restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia. By integrating Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, the research explores how authenticity perceptions influence both cultural and gastronomic experiences and contribute to sustainable consumption behavior. The study also investigates the moderating role of consumer knowledge in enhancing green consumerism and its subsequent impact on behavioral intention to dine at heritage restaurants. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study first conducted content analysis on online reviews to identify key attributes that shape authenticity perceptions. Subsequently, a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was applied to survey data collected from 417 patrons of heritage restaurants in Hail. The findings confirm that perceived authenticity significantly enhances consumers' cultural and gastronomic experiences, which in turn fosters green consumerism and strengthens behavioral intention to visit authentic restaurants. Furthermore, green consumerism acts as a key mediator between authenticity, cultural experiences, and purchase intention. Consumer knowledge further moderates this relationship, amplifying the positive effect of green consumerism on behavioral intention. The study contributes to the growing literature on sustainable gastronomy tourism by demonstrating the crucial interplay between authenticity, sustainability, and consumer knowledge in the heritage restaurant sector. It also offers practical recommendations for restaurant managers, policymakers, and tourism marketers to enhance the authentic dining experience while promoting environmentally responsible behavior. By fostering awareness of cultural and environmental values, heritage restaurants can play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable tourism development in Hail and beyond.

Keywords: authenticity; green consumerism; consumer knowledge; gastronomy tourism; heritage restaurants; Hail; Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

As with today's restaurant sectors, it has become very important to provide an authentic dining experience or service real life restaurant to become more competitive [1]. In this study, the concept of authenticity refers to both the tangible of the meal and other more intangible features associated with dining, including the quality of service and the ambiance [2,3]. Currently, restaurants aim at creating an impression that makes consumers loyal to their places by creating a uniqueness, which is an important factor considered when marking the restaurants' authenticity [4].

Authenticity is a complex construct that has considerable influence over consumer choice to varying extents in the field of heritage restaurants [5,6]. Heritage restaurants attract consumers due to authenticity of cultural entertainment, as these are perceived to be the lifestyles that embrace truth [7]. This is a major reason why customers run to ethnic and heritage restaurants with the aim of getting the real experience or culture of that nation [8]. In the context of heritage restaurants, the appearance of authenticity plays the role of an essential group characteristic ensuring the directions

of consumers' intentions and establishing the general impression [9]. Authenticity is judged according to the set perception of a particular culture or heritage as passing through the consumer scrutiny test [6].

Consumer knowledge is a critical factor in improving the sustainability of restaurants and the dining experience [10]. Informed consumers will pay more respect and worth to the concept of authenticity of eating out, and the hard work invested to endorse the historical and culturally historical worth [11]. Such an understanding may help amplify acceptance of restaurants that follow sustainable business practices because the consumer public understands that the roles of authenticity and sustainability are intertwined [12]. Consumers, for their part, can increase the enjoyment of dining by using their knowledge of where food comes from and why, and what the proper ways for preparing it are as pointed out by restaurants and cafes [13]. Through an enhancement of cultural reasoning restaurants are able to offer their customers a far richer experience, allowing them to gain a far better understanding of the situation they find themselves in [14].

As the role and importance of both authenticity and sustainably in gastronomy and hospitality industries have been established in past studies, there is a shortage of studies measuring the relationship between two concepts specifically in the context of heritage restaurants. Previous studies examined history, the locations, and size/ ownership type as drivers of authentic cultural/ gastronomic experience [15], however, there is no study that investigates the role of perceived authenticity in shaping it. While studies have explored the role of perceived authenticity in influencing positive emotions, value [5,16], brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality [17], and intention to purchase [6], its connection directly to green consumerism and how it ultimately shapes behavioral intentions remains underexplored.

Another understudied line of research is whether consumer knowledge will moderate the proposed relationships between green consumerism and behavioral intentions in authentic restaurants. This gap translates to the question of how different amounts of consumer knowledge about the restaurant's heritage might be influencing consumers' perceptions and decision-making. Therefore, this study has four objectives. It aims to (1) analyze the impact of perceived authenticity on authentic cultural and gastronomic experiences in Hail's heritage restaurants, (2) assess the role of green consumerism in linking between both perceived authenticity, authentic cultural and behavioral intention, (3) examine consumer knowledge as a moderating factor between green consumerism and behavioral intention. (4) propose strategies for enhancing sustainability in gastronomy tourism in Hail.

The findings from this research present the following useful implications to the existing body of knowledge. First, it helps to fill the existing literature knowledge gap for heritage restaurants dealing with authenticity, in Hail, Saudi Arabia. Although, there are a number of prior research investigating authenticity in different restaurant contexts including ethnic restaurants [8,11] and traditional brand restaurants [4], but no prior research has focused on heritage restaurants. This study fills this gap by studying the impact of perceived authenticity on the experiences of consumers in these authentic dining establishments.

Secondly, it extends the literature on perceived authenticity and green consumerism. The results of the prior research suggest that authenticity has a positive correlation with other variables such as perceived quality, value, and behavioral intentions [5,17]. Though very limited empirical investigation has been made to establish the structural relationship between authenticity and green consumerism. This research fills this gap by examining how authenticity perceptions may influence consumers' perceptions and behaviors regarding sustainability in the domain of dining.

Third, it adds to the scant literature on how consumer knowledge impacts the association between green consumerism and behavioral intentions. Although studies such as [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [10] has discussed the role of consumer knowledge regarding other experience dimensions of other experiences in restaurants, the role of consumer knowledge as a moderator between green consumerism and behavioral intentions is comparatively under-researched. This study responds to this by analyzing how levels of food and culture related knowledge influence consumers' reactions to sustainability interventions in heritage restaurants.

Finally, this study provides applied knowledge for advancing sustainability in gastronomy tourism in Hail. The study's implications are that knowledge about the culture and consumers can be used to market heritage restaurants and promote environmentally friendly consumption behavior among consumers. This has implications for the sustainable development of the tourism industry in

the region, especially at a time when the world is turning more focused to more responsible tourism practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

People's assessments of a culinary experience are influenced by their desire to eat regional and ethnic cuisine [18]. Cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) uses cognitive and emotive assessments to find differences in consuming experiences [19]. In particular, cognitive evaluation is suggested to be the mental processes that link emotional reactions to stimuli [20]. According to [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [21], an appraisal is a "cognitive process [and] the way an individual defines and evaluates relationships with the environment." Different subconscious assessments of a stimulus make up the appraisal process (also known as appraisal dimensions), and aspects including novelty, goal relevance, goal congruence, and certainty have been studied as factors that influence certain emotions [22]. Despite the rarity of CAT adoption in food tourism research, studies have looked at a number of topics, including hostility [23], feelings in online reviews [24], and reasons for buying organic wine [25]. Despite the significance of these difficulties, there are few research that look at authenticity assessments [5].

In contrast to earlier research on food tourism, which suggests perceived authenticity as an antecedent factor of emotions (see [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [26], we contend, based on CAT, that food authenticity is an outcome of emotional responses arising from authentic food consumption. Food authenticity is a cognitive belief about authentic food experiences during travel. Therefore, visitors' perceptions of the good or negative feelings they get from eating (in)authentic cuisine might influence their assessments of authenticity [27]. Emotions influence cognitive assessments of authenticity, as the branding research indicates [27]. As a result, the conceptual framework and suggested hypotheses for this study are based on CAT.

There are many theoretical frameworks that are often used to explain green consumption. Notably, the theory of planned behavior and its expansions [28] are widely used [29]. Other theories include norm activation theory [30] and the stimulus–organism–behavior–consequence model [31]. Furthermore, the social cognitive theory [32] and the value-belief-norm theory [33] have been used. The green theory has been suggested for analyzing green buying behavior [34], and some research combine many theories, such as the value-belief-norm theory and the theory of planned behavior [35]. Although the majority of the research focuses on positive features, there is increasing interest in examining negative aspects via the application of the signaling theory [36], the theory of planned behavior, and the theory of reasoned action [37].

The three main elements of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory—introduced by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [38] and expanded upon by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [39]—provide a framework for examining user behavior. According to this theory, an individual's internal or perceptual state may be influenced by external environmental signals, which may then result in a behavioral response. While [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [40] found that green consumerism is influenced by consumer confidence and environmental consciousness, [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [41] used the stimulus-organization-response (S-O-R) model to investigate green consumption intention in rural tourism. The S-O-R paradigm has been utilized by researchers to examine the ecological, cognitive, and economic aspects that influence the consumption of green garments [42] as well as the effect of green advertising on consumers' intentions to buy energy-saving items [43]. This study uses the S-O-R framework to examine the stimulus that leads to customer perception of green consumption, factors that both encourage and hinder green consumption, and the consequences of green consumption. Previous studies have used the S-O-R framework to identify the motivating factors for green consumption. We also examine the elements that promote green consumption and lead to eat at authentic restaurants specially in Hail of Saudi Arabia.

2.2. Authentic Gastronomic Experience

Gastronomy has grown in importance as a component of tourism experiences and frequently offers visitors interesting and unforgettable experiences [44]. It is crucial for gourmet locations to produce authentic culinary experiences since gastronomists are more concerned with authenticity than other visitors [45]. What makes food and dining experiences authentic was the main focus of the early research on the relationship between authenticity and gastronomy. Food (such as regional

products and traditional cooking techniques) [46], the physical environment (such as décor) [47], and the social environment (such as coworkers and other patrons) [48] are all crucial components.

However, from a comprehensive destination viewpoint, more study should be done on genuine experiences and gastronomy [49]. Multiple businesses and stakeholders provide tourists with products and services that shape their overall and genuine experiences in a destination [50]. In the context of gastronomy tourism, multiple stakeholders also shape tourists' gastronomic experiences (Richards, 2021). Even while authenticity plays a big part in influencing travelers' inclinations to visit a place [51], little is known about what makes for genuine culinary experiences [52].

2.3. Development of Hypotheses

2.3.1. Authenticity

The Latin term authenticus and the Greek word authentikos, which denote a feeling of reliability, are the sources of the word "authenticity," according [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [53]. According to [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [54], it is used to characterize anything that is authentic, unique, innocent, sincere, honest, and unaffected. There is currently no consensus on the precise concept of authenticity, despite the fact that several scholars have given the word associations and denotations [55]. However, some scholars advanced our knowledge of authenticity by distinguishing three dimensions: existential, constructive, and objective [56,57]. Specifically, the objectivist viewpoint views authenticity as the source of an object or the opinions of experts [58]. According to [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [59] and [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [60], the constructive viewpoint is a projection of one's own views, expectations, and beliefs that is primarily staged and negotiated. The existential component examines authenticity as being genuine to oneself and is associated with the consumer's experience (Jamal & Hill, 2004).

The terms indexical and iconic authenticity were first used by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [62]. Indexical authenticity refers to anything that is authentic and genuine but not an imitation, whilst iconic authenticity refers to something that is very similar to or near the original. Authenticity is best understood as an evaluation conducted by a certain assessor in a specific situation [62]. They emphasized that people's perceptions and interpretations of objects and expressions determine whether a restaurant is authentic or inauthentic [62]. This was in line with several studies [63,64] that showed that customers' perceptions of the same restaurant may differ in terms of authenticity. Furthermore, [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [65] pointed out that the authenticity of Saudi Arabia cuisine is subjective, especially when it comes to the environment of Saudi Arabia cuisine. Therefore, the constructive authenticity of Saudi Arabia traditional branded restaurants as viewed by customers is the main emphasis of this article.

2.3.2. Effect of Perceived Authenticity on Consumers' Authentic Gastronomic and Cultural Experiences

A food product's lengthy history is one aspect of visitors' genuine experiences [66]. Better opinions of dining value and more positive behavioral intentions are the results of positive emotions associated with authenticity [67]. A theoretical model of the effect of perceived authenticity on consumers' authentic gastronomic and culture experiences, drawing on cognitive appraisal theory (CAT). CAT, which focuses on the cognitive process involved in emotion elicitation, provides a theoretical lens to explain the antecedents of the various emotions evoked by food experiences [68].

The substantial positive impact of object-related authenticity on existential authenticity was studied by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [69] in their consumer-based model of authenticity. This relationship has been replicated in settings such as museums and heritage sites [70] and dining establishments [71]. Consumers' need to rediscover their origins and arouse feelings of nostalgia may be met by strategically integrating historic qualities into product offers with a particular geographical and temporal identity [71]. However, there hasn't been much empirical study done on the link between perceived authenticity and consumers' authentic gastronomic and cultural experiences. Therefore, we suggest:

H1. *Perceived authenticity positively influences consumers' authentic gastronomic and cultural experiences.*

2.3.3. Green Consumerism

Customers are becoming ardent supporters of socially conscious conduct as a result of their growing concerns about the negative effects of corporate operations on the environment [72]. Green consumerism is defined as consumer awareness of the climate change dilemma and actions or movements to preserve the environment and lessen the harmful effects of consumption [73]. The influence of green marketing and green practices for restaurants has been the subject of several studies, according to a review of prior research [74].

Customers have positive opinions about green firms as a result of environmental concerns. The underlying idea [75] states that positive attitudes might influence customers' behavioral intentions [76]. Researchers often claim that customers' purchasing choices are influenced by their perceptions of the efficacy of eco-friendly behavior, green consumption patterns in daily life, environmental awareness, and a company's green reputation [77]. Customers' behavioral intentions are positively impacted by a restaurant's green image [78]. However, the criteria that customers take into account while choosing a restaurant might fluctuate depending on the kind of restaurant and various market groups [79]. According to a study by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [74] on how Generation Y views green restaurants, millennials are more interested in sustainable food consumption, in-store recycling bins, and bio-based materials, such as bio-plastics for food packaging, disposable cups, and reusable mugs, than they are in green design or on-site energy efficiency. Additionally, research indicates that millennials are inclined to pay extra for green practices [80]. Businesses that prioritize sustainability, including restaurants and hotels, may draw in devoted eco-friendly clients who come back and/or make further purchases [81]. But according to the reference, Generation Y is less devoted to hotels or travel websites and is more eager to explore new places and have unique experiences. An effective connection should be the foundation of researchers' attempts to boost Generation Y customers' loyalty [82]. There are no previous studies that investigated the effect of perceived authenticity on green consumerism in restaurants. Therefore, the following hypothesis is:

H2: *Perceived authenticity positively influences green consumerism in authentic restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia.*

H3: *Consumers' authentic gastronomic and cultural experiences positively influence green consumerism in authentic restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia.*

According to current research, the most significant explanatory factor of willing to pay in green restaurants is demonstrating care for the environment [83]. For example, [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [84] found that 68.3% of respondents were inclined to spend more for environmentally friendly restaurant items. According to other research, a high willing to pay level is a result of participation in social and environmental actions [85]. In addition, Healthiness is the most significant element that influences consumers' choices about what to eat when they have a strong intention to buy. It has been shown that food flavor is a significant motivator when making food purchases, therefore healthiness is not the only noteworthy feature of food that affects the choice to buy [86]. Taste impressions have a considerable impact on customers' intents to purchase, according to research by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [87]. Consumers' perceptions of food quality are growing, and it has been shown to be a crucial component in boosting diners' inclinations to return [88]. Although there are previous studies that examine food tastiness and healthiness effect on purchase intention, there are no studies that investigate the impact of green consumerism on authentic restaurant purchase. Therefore, the following hypothesis is:

H4: *Green consumerism positively influences behavioral intention to eat at authentic restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia.*

According to a number of studies, green consumption has emerged as a fundamental consumer value and belief in contemporary culture [89]. Because of this, modern customers often prioritize green goods and services and take proactive steps to protect the environment [90]. According to S-O-R, green hotels and their environmental activities may trigger consumers to reflect as green and responsible consumers [91]. Consumers may be prompted to choose and return to green hotels in this situation by the hotels' ethical and environmentally friendly practices. Customers' attitudes and ideas regarding environmental protection and the environmental actions of green hotels serve as signals that activate and encourage their green consumption value [92]. According to studies, customers are encouraged to remain and return to green hotels because they believe that the perceptions of green

hotel practices activate and construct the green consumption value [90]. There are no previous studies that investigate the mediating role of green consumerism in the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchasing intention in authentic restaurants, and between consumers' authentic gastronomic and cultural experiences and purchasing intention in authentic restaurants, especially in Hail of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the following hypotheses are:

H5: *Green consumption value positively mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchasing intention in authentic restaurants.*

H6: *Green consumption value positively mediates the relationship between consumers' authentic gastronomic/ cultural experiences and purchasing intention in authentic restaurants.*

2.3.4. Consumer Knowledge

[NO_PRINTED_FORM] [93] contend that the relationship between perceived authenticity and behavioral intention is not always positive and that familiarity acts as a moderator between authenticity perception and behavioral intention without examining the effect of familiarity on customers' authenticity perceptions. Perceived authenticity and behavioral intention are positively correlated for patrons who are acquainted with the ethnic food (for example, consumers who are familiar with Saudi cuisine). However, there is no favorable link for patrons who are unfamiliar with the ethnic food (for example, eating tradition food of Saudi Arabia). One possible explanation is that customers with less expertise are more prone than those with more knowledge to rate the authentic restaurants. Nonetheless, knowledgeable consumers who has green consumerism habits may assess the quality of food in authentic restaurants. Therefore, the following hypothesis is:

H7: *The customer's prior knowledge moderates the effect of green consumerism on the purchasing intention to eat at authentic restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia.*

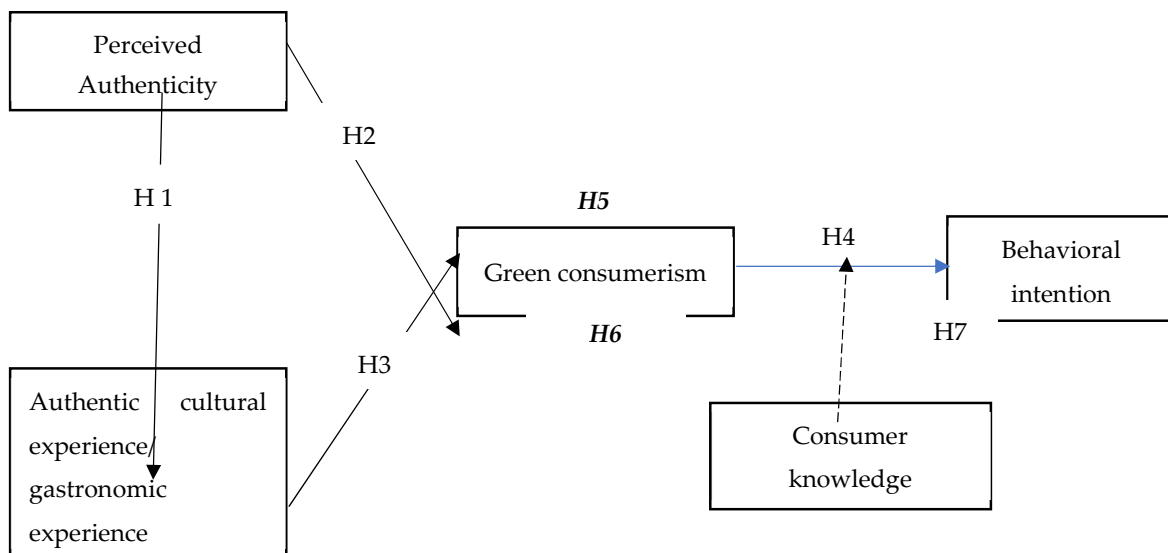The hypothesized model is demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

3. Research Design

3.1. Methods

This research used a mixed-methods methodology, using qualitative and quantitative techniques successively to investigate the key characteristics of restaurants authenticity perception on green consumerism and purchasing intention. To compile consumer assessments of the main factors of environment authenticity, food authenticity, historical and cultural value, nostalgia and brand value, study 1 first gathered internet reviews and rating information for the authentic restaurant in Hail using content analysis. To determine which features patrons value most and how they affect

their overall assessment of the authentic restaurants, a regression analysis was then conducted on the rating data. To develop relevant study hypotheses, Study 2 built a theoretical model that covers the most valued features, the variables affecting them, and their association with the other variables. Customers of Hail were surveyed using a questionnaire, and data analysis and hypothesis testing were done using the structural equation model. Both exploratory and confirmatory research issues may be addressed by the mixed-methods approach, which also offers a wider range of divergent and/or complementary viewpoints and stronger conclusions than a single method or worldview [94].

3.2. The Study Case: Authentic Restaurants in Hail

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the perception of authenticity, green consumerism and purchasing intention to authentic restaurants that come with producing traditional culinary dishes in Hail, Saudi Arabia. Because of Saudi Arabia's expanding tourism sector and the relative novelty of the hospitality sector providing visitors with traditional cuisine, this research was conducted there [95].

4. Study 1: Exploring Key Attributes of Authentic Restaurants

4.1. Research Process

Online reviews from Tripadvisor, Yelp, and Google My Business were used as the data source for this investigation. Users may score a restaurant based on four criteria: food, atmosphere, service, and overall assessment. They can also share their experiences via text, images, and videos. Researchers gathered customer reviews of authentic restaurants in Hail from 2020 to 2024. User IDs, review timestamps, overall restaurant ratings, detailed review texts, and evaluations for the restaurant's cuisine, atmosphere, and service were among the data. Reviews were written in Arabic and English. After that, an Excel spreadsheet including these evaluations was created for further examination.

For the authentic restaurant in Hail online review websites, a total of 500 reviews were gathered. 420 reviews had ratings of 4 or higher, while the total restaurant ratings varied from 1 to 5. Both the customer reviews and the associated ratings data were examined by the researchers. Every analysis was first conducted in Arabic and then translated into English.

Using the QDA Miner 2024, content analysis was performed on the empirical study data, building on the literature from the first review. In this research, the methodology described by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [96] was used to create exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. To find cases where codes appeared together or in close proximity to one another, co-occurrence analysis—also carried out in QDA Miner (2024)—was used. In the end, this analysis made it easier to categorize the authentic restaurants shown in the case study by enabling us to determine the connections between the codes and cases.

4.2. Coding Customer Reviews

In order to create the codes and categories, the current study adopted the qualitative content analysis approach involving the analysis of the customers' reviews of heritage restaurants. Firstly, the data were reviewed several times to build a passive familiarity and collect an overall impression concerning the data provided. A combination of deductive and inductive coding methods was used, guided by pre-identified categories: The seven criteria are Environment Authenticity (EA), Food Authenticity (FA), Historical/Cultural Value (HC), Nostalgia (NOS), Brand Value (BV). Specific phrases and constantly mentioned keywords in the reviews were detected and as far as the context was concerned these preliminary categories were assigned. Phrases concerning elements of the physical environment or traditional setting were coded EA, those concerning the quality, individuality, or tradition of the food were coded FA. The same way the HC tag was used to archive observations related to cultural experiences or heritage, while speculations in a narrative or sharing of an individual experience such as memory triggered by or related to the narrative but different from HC was categorized as NOS. Finally, opinion samples involving references to the reputation, recommendation or popularity of the restaurant were categorized under BV. Such intensive coding helped in a way to sort the qualitative data into relevant code groups and subgroups systematically. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Coding of reviews.

Category	Codes
Environment Authenticity (EA)	"Beautiful place"
	"Traditional seating"
	"Authentic decor and atmosphere"
Food Authenticity (FA)	"Delicious food"
	"Traditional dishes"
	"Unique cooking style"
Historical and Cultural Value (HC)	"Reflects the heritage"
	"Cultural experience"
	"Preserves history of the place"
Nostalgia (NOS)	"Reminds me of my childhood"
	"Just like old times"
	"Brings back memories"
Brand Value (BV)	"Reputation of the restaurant"
	"Highly recommended by others"
	"Popular in Hail"

4.3. Results and Discussion

The word cloud depicted in Figure 2 summarizes the specific terms frequently used by the consumers in their reviews about heritage restaurants in Hail city, Saudi Arabia. Here, we can see that the larger and bolder words represent higher occurrence and importance, such as "restaurant," "food," and "delicious," "excellence", and "good" which all speak so much about customer satisfaction and quality of food. Other significant words include: "clean", "service", "recommend", "taste", and "family" underlining aspects of cleanness, service and appropriateness of the venue for group gatherings like families. On the other hand, terms like "bad", "price", "reasonable" signify an issue or a negative analysis about the price and customers' complaining. The word cloud gives a comprehensive and qualitative view of key perception and experiences of consumers and reflects their expectation from heritage dining establishments in the region.

Figure 2. Word frequency analysis.

The dendrogram in Figure 2 also illustrates the hierarchical clustering of key attributes Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, coefficient of Variation that representing cultural and gastronomic experiences in heritage restaurants in Hail, KSA determined by Jaccard coefficient. These are on the left-hand side and grouped by themes, such as ambiance (blue), cultural significance (orange), nostalgia (red), and reputation (cyan). The clustering is carried out based on how often the terms occur together; therefore, we have terms such as 'Authentic decor and atmosphere' next to 'Beautiful place' in the same cluster as well as 'Delicious food'. In the same manner, terms such as "Cultural experience," and "Preserves history of the place" are framed which also comes under the same context of the heritage. Haven brings back memories and just like old times highlight end users being familiar with the product while reputation of the restaurant and highly recommended by others, portrays social proof. Understanding the agglomeration structure is useful to see how these themes intersect to explain the consumers' perceptions and behavioral intentions towards gastronomic experiences.
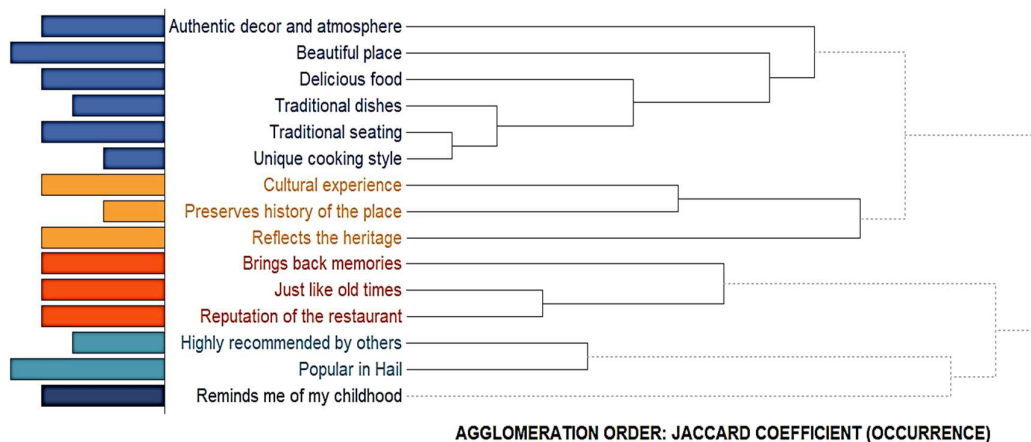

Figure 3. Hierarchical Clustering of Key Attributes Influencing Gastronomic and Cultural Experiences in Heritage Restaurants.

Figure 4 shows the network map of the important parameters associated with heritage restaurants' gastronomes and cultural offering for which connection strength is based on correlation coefficients. Ones are specific features and twos are the connections between the ones or the correlation of features, and thicker lines meaning higher correlation. Thus, such attributes as, for example, "Highly recommended by others" and "Popular in Hail" are absolutely consistent, r =1.000, and this means that consumers also associate them. As with the other examples, "Preserves history of the place" and "Cultural experience" substantiate close connection -- drawing attention to the cultural value of experience. On the other hand, the link between "Authentic decor and atmosphere" and the choice of "Reflects the heritage" is not very strong at 0.500, underlining importance of heritage in culture. It represents connections between attributes and determine which ones are linked with each other, which creates a focus on the importance of cultural, affectionate and word-of-mouth clusters in understanding the consumer behavioral intentions towards heritage restaurants.
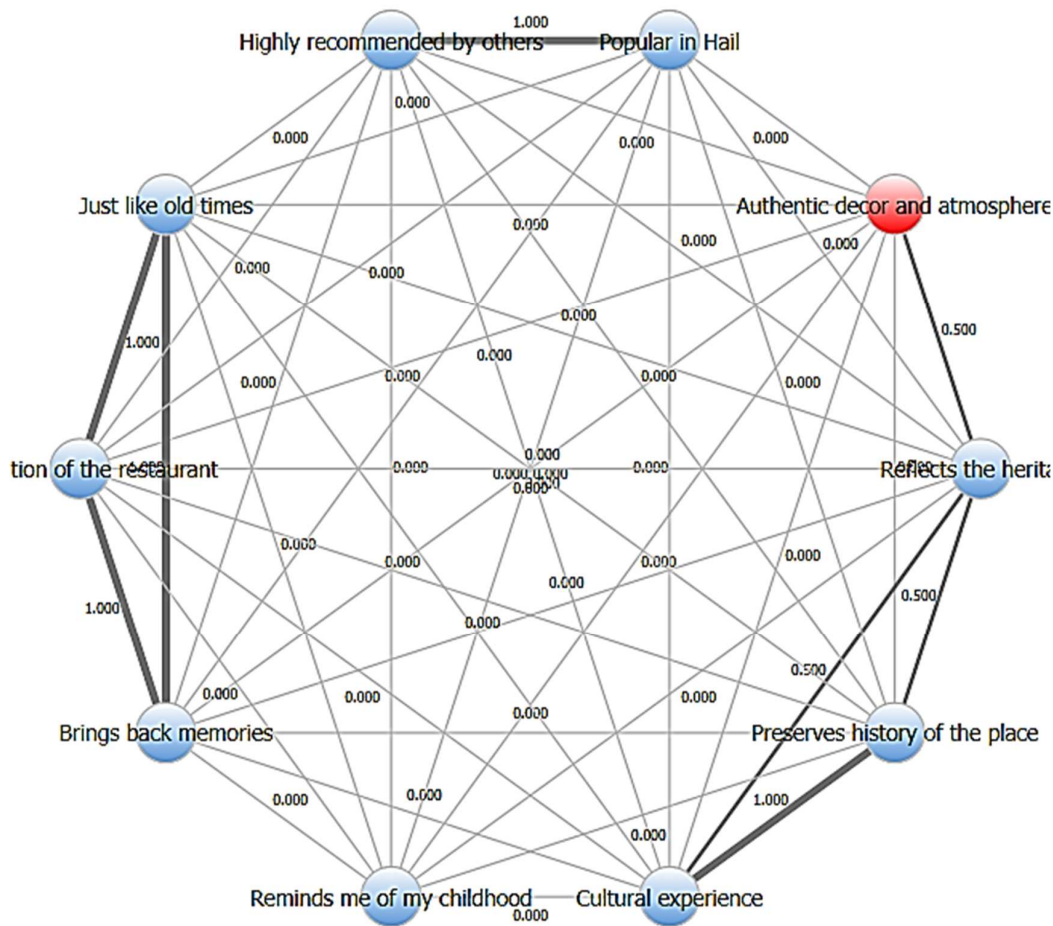
Figure 4. Link analysis.

5. Study 2: Influencing Factors of the Key Attributes and Their Impact on Customer Purchasing Intentions

5.1. Questionnaire Design

This study's questionnaire was broken up into five sections. Five major components were assessed in the first section: brand value, historical and cultural value, food authenticity, environment authenticity, and nostalgia. Environmental authenticity was assessed using a five-item scale by Jang et al. (2012) and Liu et al. (2018). Food authenticity was assessed using a five-item scale by Jang et al. (2012) and Liu et al. (2018). Moreover, historical and cultural value was measured using a four-item scale by Chen et al. (2020). Nostalgia evaluates customers' judgments of the association with the past and constructed from Fritz et al. (2017). Chen et al. (2018) developed scales for brand value, with five items. Furthermore, authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience, was measured using a scale by Kim & Kim, 2020, which included four items. Furthermore, green consumerism was measured using five-items from Riva et al. (2022). Consumer Knowledge was measured by four-items from Song and Kim (2022). Finally, behavioral intention was measured by three-items from Jang et al. (2012) and Chen et al. (2020).

The scales were translated and back-translated because the study was carried out in an Arabic environment. One of the authors first translated from English to Arabic using a forward translation. The translated scale was then examined and debated by a group of multilingual specialists who make sure it took into consideration Arabic language habits and cognitive processes in order to preserve the measurements' accuracy. The back translation was done by a competent, independent multilingual translator to finish the procedure. A five-point Likert scale was used to score each item, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." Demographic data, including gender,

age, education level, monthly income, and frequency of restaurant visits, were gathered in the second section of the survey.

5.2. Data Collection

Participants were the patrons of the real restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia, where the study was carried out. We distributed and collected the questionnaires immediately by intercepting patrons within the restaurant and using a one-to-one approach. We contacted patrons after their dinner to ask them to voluntarily participate in the survey after getting approval from the restaurant management, who also recommended that researchers eat there. As a thank you, respondents were given modest gifts such as juice or mineral water. With 417 valid surveys out of 488 distributed, the validity percentage was 85.4%.

The gender ratio of the respondents was almost equal, with males comprising 54.92% and females making up 45.08%. A significant portion, specifically 86%, fell within the age range of 18 to 25. The education levels were notably elevated, with a significant portion (64.75%) possessing bachelor's degrees, 26.38% having completed high school, and 6.72% achieving a master's degree or higher. In terms of monthly income, 48.68% reported earnings below 3,000 SAR, 10.79% indicated earnings between 3,000 SAR and 5,500 SAR, while 26.14% chose not to disclose their income. A significant majority of respondents, specifically 82.25%, identified as students.

5.3. Data Analysis

The research used partial least squares structural equation modeling to analyze data. PLS-SEM modeling and research are becoming more widespread in numerous sectors [97,98]. With SmartPLS v.3, construct reliability and validity were tested. Second, the structural model was examined for path coefficient significance, R^2 (determination coefficient), and endogenous predictive relevance (Q^2). SmartPLS software tests moderated mediating impact last.

5.3.1. Measurement Model Analysis

The reflecting measuring model is the one used in this investigation. The reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of this kind of model are usually evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation. Table 2 illustrates that the model structure's Cronbach's α (CA) is more than 0.7, the cutoff point the model must surpass in order to be deemed dependable. Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) scores for all constructions above the 0.7 criterion, ranging from 0.818 to 0.960. Consequently, the items for each variable exhibit a high degree of internal consistency and repeatability of the results.

Table 2. Testing of the measurement model.

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	VIF
Perceived Authenticity	EA1	0.645	0.535	0.960	0.963	2.245
	EA2	0.642				4.204
	EA3	0.652				4.215
	EA4	0.701				4.402
	EA5	0.731				4.370
	FA1	0.749				3.081
	FA2	0.782				4.038
	FA3	0.734				3.649
	FA4	0.766				3.370
	FA5	0.783				3.012
	HC1	0.720				2.360
	HC2	0.787				2.836
	HC3	0.763				2.747
	HC4	0.773				2.944
	NOS1	0.776				3.714

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR	CA	VIF
	NOS2	0.705				2.486
	NOS3	0.750				3.220
	NOS4	0.704				2.889
	BV1	0.768				3.036
	BV2	0.707				2.500
	BV3	0.733				2.986
	BV4	0.715				2.918
	BV5	0.711				2.896
Green consumerism	GCON1	0.814	0.679	0.882	0.913	2.236
	GCON2	0.835				2.326
	GCON3	0.830				2.378
	GCON4	0.864				2.719
	GCON5	0.774				1.872
Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience	GASE1	0.840	0.737	0.881	0.918	2.102
	GASE2	0.850				2.266
	GASE3	0.890				2.804
	GASE4	0.853				2.330
Consumer knowledge	KNOW1	0.760	0.585	0.771	0.849	1.385
	KNOW2	0.846				1.626
	KNOW3	0.741				1.611
	KNOW4	0.704				1.622
Behavioral intention	INT1	0.895	0.818	0.889	0.818	2.574
	INT1	0.914				2.598
	INT1	0.904				2.594

Convergent validity was evaluated in this research using the composite reliability (CR), average variance extraction (AVE) criteria, and index of factor loading. Standardized factor loadings of 0.7 or higher, AVE values of 0.5 or higher, and CR values of 0.7 or higher taken together often suggest an appropriate degree of convergent validity. In exploratory study, a lower limit of 0.5 to 0.6 may also be appropriate, even if 0.7 is regarded as the norm [99]. The outer loading value in this study, which is shown in Table 2, satisfies every requirement listed. Additionally, VE and CR values follow the previously mentioned guidelines. Consequently, it is possible to thoroughly demonstrate the study model's convergence.

We investigated discriminant validity by comparing the square root values of AVE with the correlation coefficients between constructs using the Fornell-Larcker criteria. It should be mentioned that the correlation coefficient between constructs should never be more than the AVE square root value of the constructs [100]. This measuring model is thought to have discriminant validity because it meets the previously stated condition, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity.

	Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience	Behavioral intention	Consumer knowledge	Green consumerism	Perceived Authenticity
Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience	**0.858**				
Behavioral intention	0.523	**0.905**			
Consumer knowledge	0.179	0.274	**0.765**		
Green consumerism	0.690	0.423	0.146	**0.824**	
Perceived Authenticity	0.548	0.355	0.133	0.600	**0.732**

Notes: The diagonal components (bold) display the square roots of AVEs. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructions.

5.3.2. Structural Equation Model and Hypotheses Analysis

The research that followed began by examining the collinearity problem in the structural model. The variance inflation factor (VIF) value was used to evaluate the collinearity problem; if the VIF

value is less than 5, it means that collinearity has no effect on the structural model. All of the VIF values in this investigation were less than 5, as shown in Table 2, suggesting that the collinearity has no effect on the structural model.

Table 4. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing.

Structural Path	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	F2	Results	2.5 %	97.5 %
Direct Effect							
Perceived Authenticity → Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience	0.548	8.034	0.000	0.429	H1, Support	0.409	0.671
Perceived Authenticity → Green consumerism	0.316	4.166	0.000	0.154	H2, Support	0.177	0.477
Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience → Green consumerism	0.517	6.788	0.000	0.411	H3, Support	0.355	0.657
Green consumerism → Behavioral intention	0.333	4.632	0.000	0.127	H4, Support	0.190	0.458
Indirect Effect							
Perceived Authenticity → Green consumerism → Behavioral intention	0.200	3.161	0.002		H5, Support	0.048	0.184
Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience → Green consumerism → Behavioral intention	0.172	2.974	0.003		H6, Support	0.073	0.303
Moderating Paths							
Green consumerism × Consumer knowledge → Behavioral intention	0.146	2.31	0.019		H7, Support	0.040	0.304

The findings, which are shown in Table 4 and Figure 5, showed that Perceived Authenticity had a significant and positive impact on the Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience (β = 0.548; t = 8.034), Perceived authenticity has a significant and positive effect on green consumerism (β = 0.316; t = 4.166), and Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience has a significant and positive effect on Green consumerism (β = 0.517; t = 6.788). H1, H2, and H3 are supported by these findings. Green consumerism had a positive and significant impact on behavioral intention (β = 0.333; t = 4.632; p = 0.000). H4 is thus supported. The findings demonstrated that all independent variables had appropriate effect sizes on their intended dependent variables ($0.127 < F2 \leq 0.429$), taking into account Cohen (2013) recommendations about effect size using the F square test.

Furthermore, the mediation effects of green consumerism on the relationships between perceived authenticity and behavioral intention and between authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience and behavioral intention were examined using a mediation test (Table 4). Results showed that green consumerism significantly and positively mediated the link between perceived authenticity and behavioral intention (effect 0.164; t = 4.430; p = 0.002) and between authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience and behavioral intention (effect = 0.172; t = 2.31; p = 0.003). As a consequence, H5 and H6 are accepted.
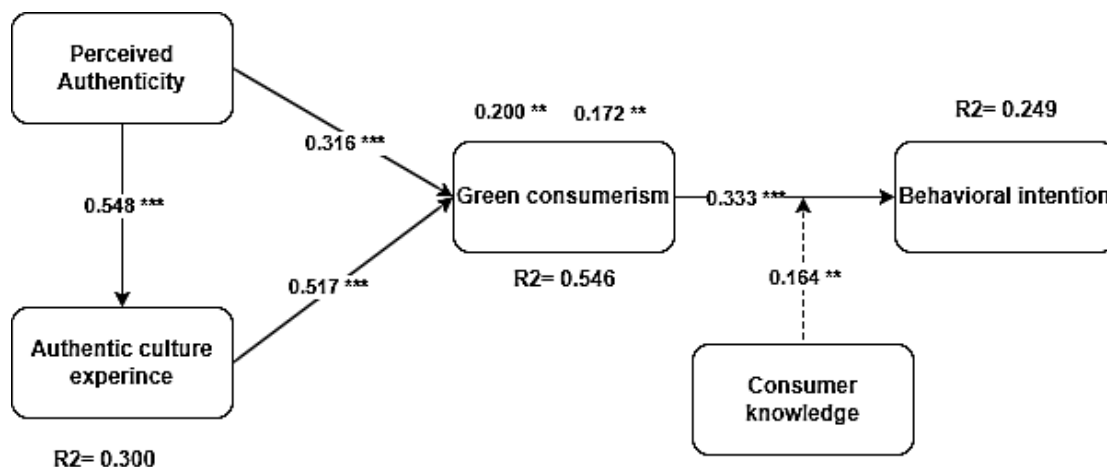

Figure 5. Results of the structural model.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the moderating effects, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 6, showed that the consumer knowledge supports H7 by enhancing the considerable impact of green consumerism on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.146$, $t = 4.053$, and $p = 0.019$).
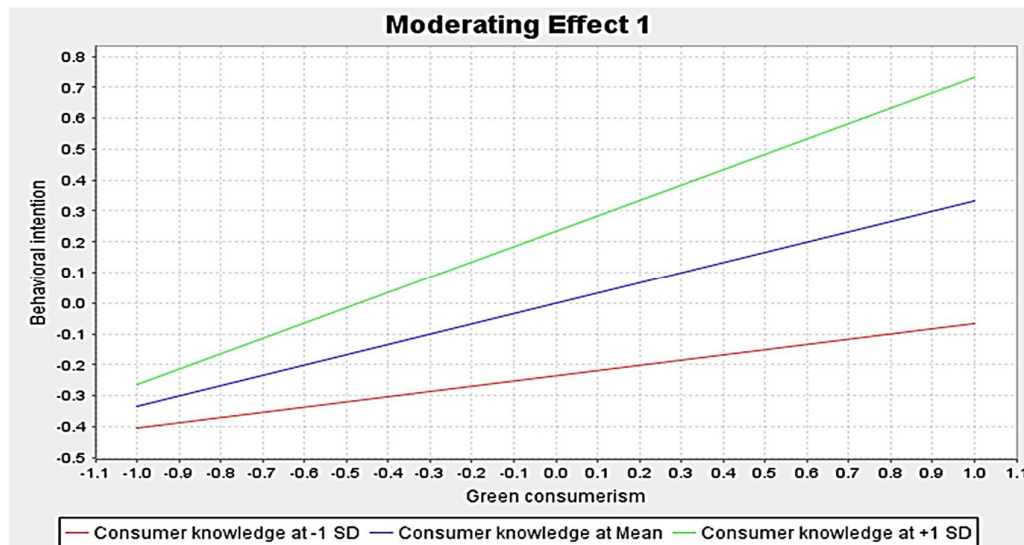

Figure 6. Interaction-plot (Consumer knowledge moderation between green consumerism and behavioral intention).

6. Discussion and Implications

This study contributes to the understanding of the impact of perceived authenticity for improved green consumerism and consumption patterns of the consumers in heritage restaurants in Hail, Saudi Arabia. The analysis validates the hypothesis that perceived authenticity contributes towards constructive culinary journey and cultural experience of the consumers (H1). This is in line with earlier findings that have underscored authenticity as major antecedent to consumer satisfaction and customer engagement in dining environments [16,69]. When applied to the study of heritage restaurants, this research restates the significance of authenticity in constructing engaging and valued dining experiences.

Furthermore, the study supports the hypothesized positive association between perceived authenticity and green consumerism (H2) following prior research on the association between authenticity and environmentally responsible behaviors [5,11]. The study's findings indicate that where consumers have an authentic perception that a restaurant embraces the culture of the society, they are likely to address sustainable dining. According to the results of this studies, Authentic cultural experience/ gastronomic experience deemed important for green consumerism (H3). These findings also support the notion of authenticity as enhancing both hedonic and utilitarian outcomes and enhancing pro-environmental consciousness consistent with Cognitive Appraisal Theory, proposed by [NO_PRINTED_FORM] [21].

The study validates that perceived green consumerism has a strong positive correlation with the behavioral intentions of eating out at authentic restaurants (H4). This corroborates past studies implying that sustainable behaviors commonly influence consumers' choices in the hospitality sector [79,83]. The coherence and significance of this relationship mean that consumers with higher levels of self-reported sustainability are more likely to signal a higher level of support for authentic heritage restaurants. This behavior affirms the increasing customer shift that seems to embrace environmentally friendly practices, as emphasized by the research conducted on green consumerism and firms' willingness to pay for green services [84].

Moreover, the analysis of mediation reinforces the content of hypotheses H5 and H6, where green consumerism is proven to act as a mediator between perceived authenticity and behavioral intentions as well as cultural experiences and behavioral intentions. These results support the framework by Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) that green consumerism is both cognitive and affective to facilitate sustainable dining behavior [39]. This therefore calls for the incorporation of the

sustainability elements as part of a heritage restaurant's strategic value proposition to affect the patrons' behavioral intentions.

Consumer knowledge also enhanced the relationship between green consumerism and behavior intention (H7). This result supports previous research on the effect of knowledge gains on promoting and responding to green campaigns [10]. These results emphasize the need for educational and informative campaigns aimed at increasing consumers' attention to sustainable activities in the sphere of hospitality and tourism services provision. It is possible that simple, informative, and entertaining information on the history of dishes and their preparation, as well as measures taken to make those meals more sustainable, would greatly improve consumer attitudes and behavioral patterns.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study is relevant to hospitality and sustainability literature by integrating perceived authenticity, green consumer behavior, and behavioral intention, essential in the context of heritage restaurants. It builds on the support for the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework by showing that perception of authenticity as a stimulus leads to consumers' cognitive/ affective state and consequent pro- sustainable dining behavior. Overall, the current study enriches the SOR framework by pointing toward green consumerism to be a relevant and significant mediating construct that can bridge between authenticity and sustainable behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, the results contribute to the expansion of the Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT) by describing the analysis of perceived authenticity in the gastronomy contexts based on the cognitive and affective means. As a result of highlighting the relationship between cultural tourism attachment and pro-sustainable behaviors, the study diversifies CAT's applicability from general tourisms settings into cultural dining situations of heritage.

This study also establishes and tests the moderating effect of consumer knowledge, which remains a rather underexplored concept in the authenticity and green consumerism literature. The usefulness of these constructs for theoretical models focusing on sustainability behaviors is demonstrated to require incorporating the aspects of individual consumers including awareness and familiarity. This advances the existing knowledge on how differences in consumer knowledge affect behavior over knowledge gaps in hospitality and tourism literature.

By connecting cultural authenticity and green consumptions with sustainable purchasing motivations this study fills a gap in the literature on dynamics of cultural heritage dining. The insights above also advance theoretical developments in more sustainability-oriented hospitable study by demonstrating the co-constitutive relationships between culture and the environment. Finally, the study lays a groundwork for future theoretical research on how existing authenticity constructs can be measured and utilized for enhancing business benefits and accomplishing other global sustainability objectives in the gastronomy and tourism industries.

6.2. Practical Implications

The study provides valuable information for heritage restaurant operators and all the stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism sectors, with special emphasis on preserving the environment and adapting methods and means to attract and retain such customers. Authenticity defines one major area of suggested improvement for enhancing consumers' experiences. Furthermore, the operators of heritage restaurants can enhance and enhance visitors' dining experiences, thus enhancing the products that they sell more valuable. They can retain customers, explain and present time-honored techniques and contexts for preparing and consuming food and beverage. These elements are not only appreciated by consumers searching for meaning behind cultural identity or connections, but also become effective strategies for naming the above-mentioned outlets, particularly when competing with similar establishments.

Another important aspect of this study is the encouragement of green consumption. Some ways that restaurants can make sustainability a part of their business model include the procurement of local food supplies, practicing portion control and incorporating sustainable packaging materials into the business model. Information of these initiatives ensures that the customers acquire trust, thus creating a market of highly regarded green consumers. Specifically, source credibility related to the training provided by the interactive displays, digital menus or via staff narratives do endorse a great amount of informative content for consumers about the sustainable practices and therefore enhances consumers' behavioral intention to eat in heritage restaurants.

Furthermore, the results indicate that incorporating the authentic sustainability model can help identify and promote heritage restaurants as distinctive and appealing niche products in the regional tourism environment. Executives in policy-making institutions, relevant ministries and state and regional tourism committees can include information about heritage restaurants in travel advertisements as an essential part of the food tourism offer. That is why, presenting cultural and environmental meaningful values, restaurants can expand their presence within global tourists and consumers.

Finally, the use of environmentally and organization sustainable and genuine strategies that promote customer patronage is beneficial. When arts venue organizations are able to adopt their appearances to the image of the current consumer–centric and sustainable restaurant experience, that forms a long-term customer relationship. Many such initiatives not only improve customer experience but also play their part in practicing more responsible types of tourism and preserving values of Culture. Culture and nature, tradition and the contemporary customer base, as well as the potential and corridors for continuing the preservation of the sustainable development paradigm in the fields of gastronomy and tourism can be attributed to the successes achieved by implementing heritage restaurants.

6.3. Limitation and Future Research

This study has the following limitations that need to be taken into account. The centrality of heritage restaurants in Hail, KSA constrains the generalization of the findings to other cultural, and regional contexts. Besides, since consumers completed the survey online and are requested to rate their perceptions, there could be socially desirable bias that influence consumer ratings on green consumerism and authenticity perceptions. Future studies might overcome these limitations by increasing the ethnic diversity of context set in which the research will take place and using panel designs to detect changes in consumers' behavior with time. Thus, the extension of this line of research and preliminary exploration of other digital interventions, for instance, the impact of social networking sites as a tool for actualism and promotion of sustainable consumption, as well as experimental investigations of the relationships between authenticity, green consumerism, and behavioral intentions would immensely expand the understanding of the topic and contribute to the development of theory and practice.

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