

Politics at the Table: A study of the relationship between menu terminology and political identity

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Motivation for the Study

- “Tell me what you eat, and I’ll tell you who you are.”

Jean Anthelm Brillat-Savarin, 1836

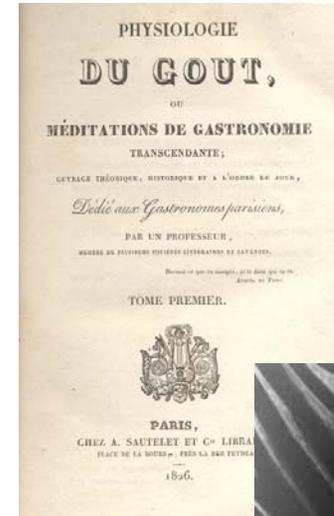
- “What then is patriotism, but the love of foods we had when we were young?”

Lin Yutang, 1938

- “For food to be good to eat, it must be good to think.”

Claude Levi-Strauss, 1962

If food can be evaluated as an extension of self-concept, what element of the self concept may influence purchase decisions in a restaurant context?



Statement of the Problem

- Restaurants must be broadly appealing to maximize their potential traffic and to satisfy the highest number of potential guests
- To do this effectively, they must understand what motivates and demotivates guests as subtle variations in menu copy have been shown to affect purchase behavior and consumer satisfaction (Guegúen & Jacob, 2012)
- The meanings of words may shift under different conceptual systems and must be understood in line with their conceptual framework (Lakoff, 2016; Fillmore 1985)
- Political identity can have an influence on consumer choice even when the decision is seemingly apolitical (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008)
- Political identity, like other social identities, may be salient even if the consumer is unaware of the activation (Jung & Mittal, 2020)

Research Question and Purpose

- This study investigated the relationship between a respondent's political identity and their acceptance (or rejection) of menu verbiage (affective and sustainable)
- How does menu verbiage intersect with political identity to influence consumer purchase intentions?
- How does menu verbiage influence consumer perceptions of price fairness and menu quality (e.g., affective and sustainable) on purchase intention?

Key Terms

- **Menu Header:** A brief description of the raison d'être of the restaurant and menu.
- **Menu Complexity** - refers to descriptive detail in the menu copy. Increased menu complexity has been positively associated with consumers' reactions to the menu and to the facility (Wansink et al., 2002)
- **Menu Labels** – refers to the primary naming aspect of an item (e.g., Hardwood Grilled Salmon).
 - **Affective Menu Labels** – Primary name of a menu item that (for purposes of this study) carries allusions to home, tradition, and patriotism (Guegúen & Jacob, 2012)
 - **Sustainable Menu Labels** -Primary name of the menu item that incorporates terms related to sustainability
- **Menu Copy/Verbiage** - refers to text which is used to frame consumer perception and promote the purchase of an item. This copy may be affective/sustainable
- **Political Identity** – The way a person views themselves based on their ideology regarding the underlying goals and ideas about how a social and political system should work (Grove, Remy, and Zeigler, 1974)

Theoretical Framework: Social Identity and Political Identity

Social Identity Theory:

- People derive value and well-being from social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)
- Social Identity can be created and validated through consumption – a concept referred to as symbolic consumption (Sorensen & Thomsen, 2006; Grubb & Grathwhol, 1967)
- Use of social identity in predicting eating behavior (Liu, Thomas, & Higgs, 2019; Creys, 2011)
- People may use restaurants to express aspects of themselves (Beriss & Sutton, 2007)

Political Identity:

- Political identity influences reception to appeals, and as such, congruency between the underlying political ideologies of the target audience and appeal may increase effectiveness (Jung & Mittal, 2020)
- Appeals that are congruent with political identity will be better received, even when the appeal may seemingly be unrelated to politics (Carney et al., 2008)

Literature

- Juransky (2014) demonstrated that restaurants can be identified according to the social classification by reference to their menus:
 - Provenance of Food is mentioned 15x in expensive vs. inexpensive restaurants
 - Bucolic Imagery
 - Inexpensive restaurants average more than twice as many items
 - Inexpensive restaurants emphasize choice of size or protein of some other “your way” option over 3x as often
 - Expensive restaurants talk about their expertise or ‘chef choice’ over 7x more than inexpensive
 - Use of longer words associated with expensive menus
 - Inexpensive menus use more positive, but vague terms about 9% more
- Labels bias taster perceptions (Lee, Shimzu, Kniffin, 2012)
 - Nutrition labels biased taste perception
 - Willingness to pay increased for organic
 - Organic often established a “halo effect” where the food was credited with “better” nutritional performance
- Price influence the subjective tasting of wine in blind scoring (Glaab et al., 2021)

Literature

- **Menu Verbiage:**

- Descriptive terminology increased intent to patronize a restaurant (Wansink, 2001) and sales (2006)
- Menu verbiage has a discernable influence on choice, purchase intention, and favorability towards the restaurant (Kozup, Creyer, & Burton, 2003)
- Menu Complexity can influence purchase intention, price expectation, & quality expectation (McCall & Lynn, 2008)
- Menu verbiage is a key element of consumer assessment (Magnini & Kim, 2016)

- **Affective Menu Verbiage:**

- Affective menu terminology increased consumers intent to patronize (Wansink, et al., 2002)
- Adjectives influenced consumer assessment (McCall & Lynn, 2008)
- Affective menu verbiage may appeal to sense of nostalgia (Gueguen & Jacob, 2011)

- **Sustainability Menu Verbiage:**

- Environmental ideology is a determinant of consumer choice (Kahn, 2007)
- Congruency between political identity and persuasive appeal enhances behavior (Kidwell, Farmer, & Hardesty, 2013)

Menu Terms and Methodology

- Organic
- Locally produced
- American made
- Home Made
- Ethically produced
- Sustainable
- Traditional
- Homestyle
- Country style
- Natural
- Family recipe
- GMO Free

If I were offered a menu using this term I would be:

- Likely to visit
- Likely to order
- Happy if offered
- Interested in ordering

Questionnaire:

Respondents responded to questions regarding their restaurant usage and then were exposed to 1 of 3 menu treatments

Participants responded to several scales to assess attitudes towards multiple aspects of the menu

Following their exposure to the menu, respondents were asked to respond to several measures to assess their strength and intensity of political identity

Response Rate:

The minimum response rate was 144 with a target of 150 to achieve R^2 of 0.10. 174 individuals completed the questionnaire

Finale Sample:

Responses from participants who failed attention checks were removed, leaving 157 cases for analysis

Scales

Menu Quality (McCall & Lynn, 2008; Naipul & Parsa, 2001)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

- This menu offers high-quality entrees.
- This menu offers a good value.
- This menu is appealing.

Purchase Intention (Konuk, 2017)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

- I would be likely to make a purchase of entrees on this menu.
- I will make an effort to purchase entrees on this menu.
- I plan to purchase entrée on this menu.

Price Perceptions (Lu & Gursoy, 2017)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

- I would recommend most of my friends/family to pay a premium for items on this menu.
- I will be happy to pay more for items on this menu.
- I am willing to pay a premium for items on this menu.
- I am willing to buy entrees on this menu in the future.

Scales

Attitude towards the Restaurant (Fakih, Assaker, Assaf, & Hallak, 2016)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

This restaurant is likely to serve other delicious, well-prepared food.

This restaurant is likely to serve healthy menu options.

This restaurant likely has a highly skilled chef.

I am likely to visit this restaurant.

Restaurant Quality (Naipul & Parsa, 2001)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

This restaurant is up to speed with food trends.

This restaurant is a fine quality establishment.

The overall value of dining at this restaurant seems high.

Self-Identification of Political Identity (Huddy, Mason & Aaroe, 2010)

Scale: [1-*Very Conservative* to 7- *Very Liberal*]

How conservative or liberal do you perceive yourself to be?

Scales

Price Fairness (Konuk, 2017)

Scale: [1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*]

The prices of these entrees are acceptable .

The prices of these entrées are fair.

The prices of these entrees are reasonable.

Strength of Political Identity (Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe, 2010)

Scale: [1- *Not at all Important* to 7- *Extremely Important*]

How important is being a (*Liberal/Conservative/Neither Liberal nor Conservative*) to you?

Scale: [1- *Not well at all* to 7- *Extremely well*]

How well does the term (*Liberal/Conservative/Neither Liberal nor Conservative*) describe you?

Scale: [1- *Never* to 7- *Always*]

When talking about (*Liberal/Conservative/Neither Liberal nor Conservative*), how often do you use the term 'we' vs. 'they'?

Scale: [1- *A great deal* to 7 - *Not at all*]

To what extent do you think of yourself as a (*Liberal/Conservative/Neither Liberal nor Conservative*)?



Menu

Our restaurant features the highest quality produce and proteins
We look forward to serving you from our kitchen
Menu items may vary based on seasonality and our chef's inspiration

Cast Iron Chicken

Cast Iron Chicken with braised greens, pan-roasted sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce,
and a biscuit
\$18

Tavern Steak

Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with local blue cheese, roasted red skin potatoes, braised
seasonal greens, caramelized onion jam, and herb butter sauce
\$25

Roasted Vegetable Gnocchi

Roasted vegetables and charred kale tossed with a herb gnocchi, in a brown butter sauce
\$15

Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Fresh Salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and ginger. Hardwood
grilled and served over braised, seasonal greens
\$22



Menu

Our **all-American** restaurant features produce, and proteins are sourced from the **heartland**. We support our **traditional community** producers and purchase **all-American** made products and favor **veteran-owned** producers.

Items are subject to change based on availability.

Our seasonal menus are created based on recipes from **traditional family** favorites.

Mom's Cast Iron Chicken

Lodge Cast Iron Roasted **Farm Raised** Chicken with braised, hand-picked greens, pan roasted sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce and a **homemade** biscuit just like **mom** used to make.
\$18

Tavern Steak

Texas raised Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with **local** blue cheese, **hearth** roasted red skin potatoes, slow braised Southern chard, caramelized **Vidalia** onion jam, and our secret **family** recipe herb butter sauce.
\$25

Roasted Vegetables with Herb Dumplings

Hearth Roasted vegetables with **Grandma's** herb gnocchi dumplings, in a brown butter sauce.
\$15

Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Alaskan Salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and herbs. **American** oak grilled and served over braised, seasonal greens.
\$22



Menu

Our restaurant is fully committed to **sustainability**. Our ingredients are **sourced from within 200 miles** of the restaurant to **reduce carbon footprint**

We support businesses and source from vendors and farmers who produce in **a sustainable** manner.

Our proteins are **GMO-free** and **antibiotic-free**.

All menu items are planned with **international sustainability** standards in mind

Cast Iron Chicken

Sustainable and locally raised, antibiotic-free cast iron roasted chicken with **locally** harvested braised greens, **locally** grown sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce, and a biscuit

\$18

Tavern Steak

Seared, **Hormone and GMO-free sustainable** Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with **local** blue cheese, roasted **local** potatoes, braised seasonal greens, caramelized onion jam, and herb butter sauce

\$25

Roasted Vegetable Gnocchi

Locally grown organic roasted vegetables tossed with house-made herb gnocchi in a brown butter sauce

\$15

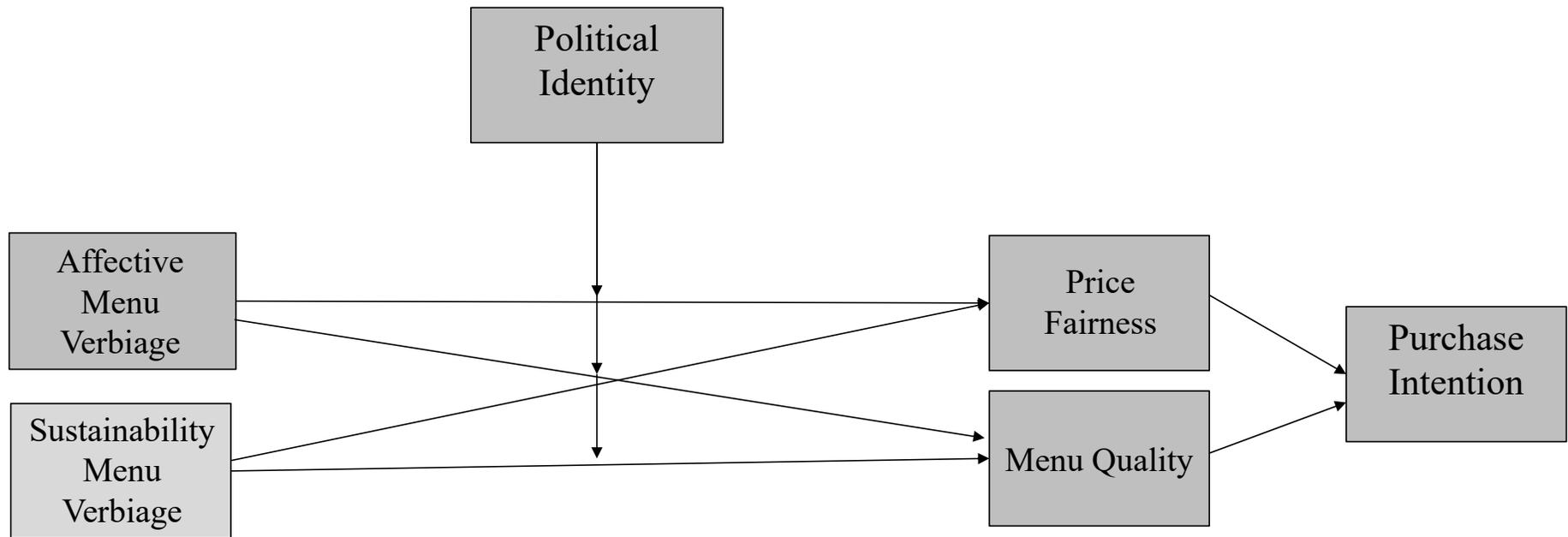
Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Our **sustainably sourced** salmon and **naturally fed** salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and ginger. Hardwood grilled and served over braised, **seasonal** greens

\$22



Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses

H1a	Affective Menu verbiage will have a positive effect on price fairness
H1b	Affective Menu verbiage will have a positive effect on menu quality
H2a	Sustainability claims will have a positive effect on assessments of price fairness
H2b	Sustainability claims will have a positive effect on assessments of menu quality
H3a	Political identity will moderate the effect of affective menu verbiage on price fairness and menu quality perceptions, such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will rate higher levels of price fairness versus respondents measuring high in liberal political identity
H3b	Political identity will moderate the effect of affective menu verbiage on price fairness and menu quality perceptions, such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will rate higher levels of menu quality versus respondents measuring high in liberal political identity
H4a	Political identity will moderate the influence of sustainability verbiage on price fairness and menu quality perceptions such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will have an unfavorable perception of price fairness
H4b	Political identity will moderate the influence of sustainability verbiage on price fairness and menu quality perceptions such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will have an unfavorable perception of menu quality compared to respondents measuring high in liberal political identity
H5	Price Fairness will positively influence purchase intention
H6	Perceptions of Menu Quality will positively influence purchase intention

Respondent Profile

- All U.S. respondents
- Most respondents had some college or a completed degree:
 - 11.46% Some College
 - 61.14% Completed Degree
- Gender was fairly balanced
 - 54.14% female
 - 45.86% male
- The majority of respondents were in the 21-34 age range (39.49%), followed by the 35-54 age cohort (30.57%) and 55-65 age range (28.03%)
- The majority (54.78%) had an income of \$50,000 or more

Age Range		
	Count	Percent
No response	1	0.64%
18-20	2	1.27%
21-34	62	39.49%
35-54	48	30.57%
55-65	44	28.03%
Total	157	100%

Education		
	Count	Percent
No response	16	10.19%
Associate Degree	16	10.19%
Bachelor's Degree	42	26.75%
Doctorate Degree	4	3.18%
High School Graduate/GED	19	12.10%
Master's Degree	29	18.47%
Professional Degree	4	2.55%
Some College, no degree	18	11.46%
Some High School, no degree	2	1.27%
Trade/Technical/Vocational Training	6	3.82%
Total	157	100

Gender		
	Count	Percent
Female	85	54.14%
Male	72	45.86%
Total	157	100.0%

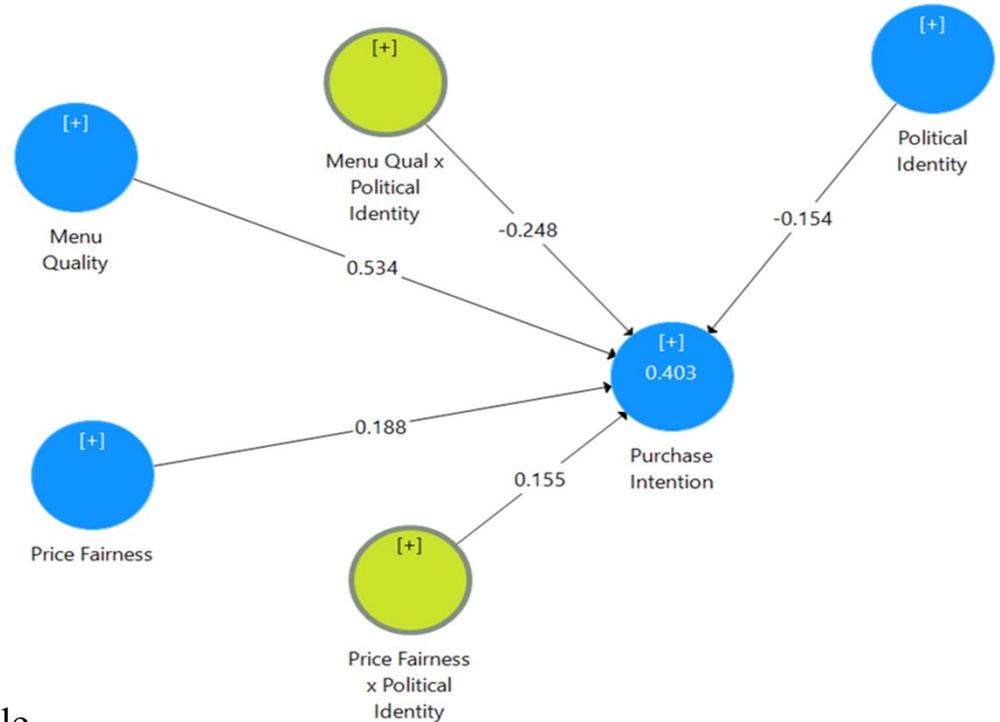
Income Range		
	Count	Percent
No response	16	10.19%
\$100,000+	27	17.20%
\$30,000-\$49,999	28	17.83%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	31	19.75%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	20	12.74%
Less than \$30,000	35	22.9%
Total	157	100

Structural Model Assessment

	Path to Purchase Intention	Path Coefficient
Complete Model	Menu Qual-Mod x Pol ID	-0.248
	Menu Quality	0.534
	Pol ID	-0.154
	Price Fair-Mod x Pol ID	0.155
	Price Fairness	0.188

	R Square
Complete Model	0.403
Control Menu	0.498
Affective Menu	0.499
Sustainability Menu	0.350
Conservative Identity	0.548
Liberal Identity	0.472

- R^2 values provide moderate to high levels of in-sample predictive power



Significance Testing

- Bootstrapping was run to ascertain whether the relationships between the constructs of menu quality, price fairness, and purchase intention were significant
- All the path coefficients are significant at the <0.05 level for the complete model
- **Menu quality->purchase intention is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ in all the models**

Significance testing of the Structural Model (Bootstrapping results)

Complete Model		Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics	P Values	Sig (p<0.05)
	Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.471	6.827	0.000	Yes
	Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.187	2.796	0.023	Yes
	Pol ID->Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	-0.27	3.931	0.005	Yes
	Pol ID->Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.173	2.096	0.040	Yes
H5	Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.343	4.351	0.023	Yes

Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

- SPSS data was exported to an Excel CSV file for Smart PLS.
- Data is not perfectly normal with a slightly non-normal distribution for political identity
- Skewness noted in several of the variable indicators
 - Price Fairness
 - Purchase Intention

							Skewness		Kurtosis	
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
This menu offers high quality entrees.	157	1.00	7.00	4.53	0.90	0.80	0.27	0.19	2.53	0.38
This menu offers a good value.	157	1.00	6.00	3.97	1.02	1.04	-0.17	0.19	0.33	0.38
This menu is appealing.	157	1.00	7.00	4.34	0.98	0.95	0.13	0.19	1.87	0.38
I would be likely to make purchase of entrees on this menu.	157	1.00	7.00	5.20	1.57	2.45	-1.25	0.19	0.90	0.38
I will make the effort to buy entrees on this menu.	157	1.00	7.00	5.33	1.19	1.42	-1.16	0.19	1.73	0.38
I plan to purchase entrees on this menu.	157	1.00	7.00	5.16	1.28	1.63	-1.00	0.19	1.28	0.38
The prices of these entrees are acceptable.	157	1.00	7.00	4.62	1.41	1.99	-0.54	0.19	-0.11	0.38
The prices of these entrees are fair.	157	1.00	7.00	4.73	1.38	1.90	-0.68	0.19	0.09	0.38
The prices of these entrees are reasonable.	156	1.00	7.00	4.70	1.42	2.01	-0.51	0.19	-0.31	0.39
How conservative or liberal do you perceive yourself to be?	157	1.00	7.00	3.85	1.86	3.47	0.02	0.19	-1.10	0.38

Structural Model Assessment

Effect size: All f^2 values indicated medium to large effect sizes. The effect size of menu quality (0.294) was large

f^2

Path	Purchase Intention
Menu Qual x Political Identity	0.102
Menu Qual	0.294
Political Identity	0.067
Price Fairness	0.056
Price Fairness x Political Identity	0.053

Both menu quality and price fairness have large q^2 effect sizes

q^2

	Q2 included	Q2 excluded	q^2 effect size
Menu Quality	0.422	0.098	0.561
Price Fairness	0.422	0.221	0.348

Predictive Relevance: All constructs exceeded the threshold Q^2 of 0.35, indicating a large predictive relevance

Q^2

Constructs	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Menu Quality	471	290.008	0.384
Price Fairness	471	126.128	0.732
Purchase Intention	471	272.087	0.422
Indicators	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
MenuQual1	157	80.148	0.49
MenuQual2	157	106.419	0.322
MenuQual3	157	103.441	0.341
PURINT1	157	120.446	0.233
PURINT2	157	77.655	0.505
PURINT3	157	73.986	0.529
PriceFair1	157	47.295	0.699
PriceFair2	157	41.354	0.737
PriceFair3	157	37.479	0.761

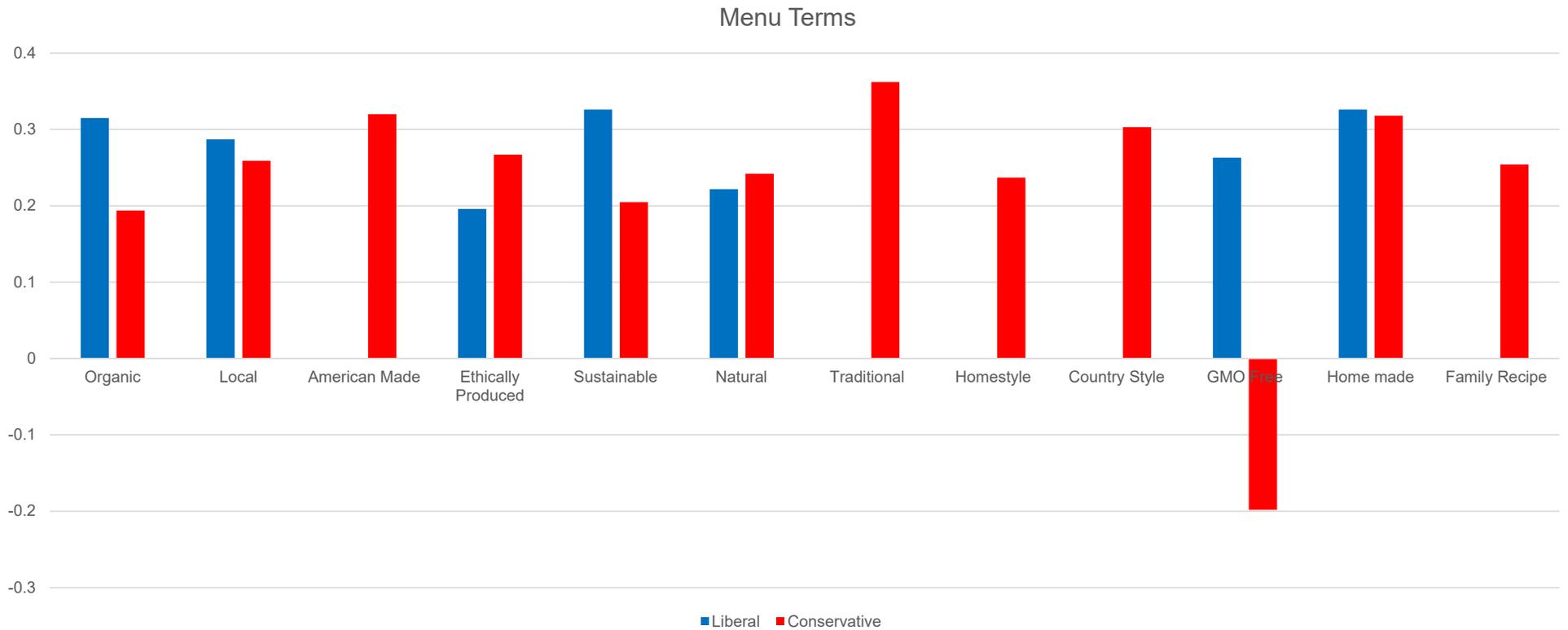
Multi-Group Analysis

Multi-Group (MGA) was performed using Smart PLS to look at differences between political identities, and political identities by menu condition.

- **For political identity, a significant difference was noted between conservatives and liberals for assessment of price fairness and menu quality and purchase intention**
- **Menu quality has a greater potential effect on purchase intention amongst conservative vs. liberals**
- **Price fairness has a greater potential effect on purchase intention for liberal vs. conservative**
- MGA did not support that political identity moderated the relationship between menu quality or price fairness and purchase intention

Conservative ID x Liberal ID	Path Coefficients-diff (Conservative - Liberal)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs Liberal)	p-Value new (Conservative vs Liberal)
Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	-0.436	0.982	0.018
Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.386	0.018	0.018
Menu Qual x Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.266	0.95	0.053
Price Fairness x Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	0.252	0.103	0.103
Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.207	0.83	0.17

Correlations of Menu Terms with Political Identity

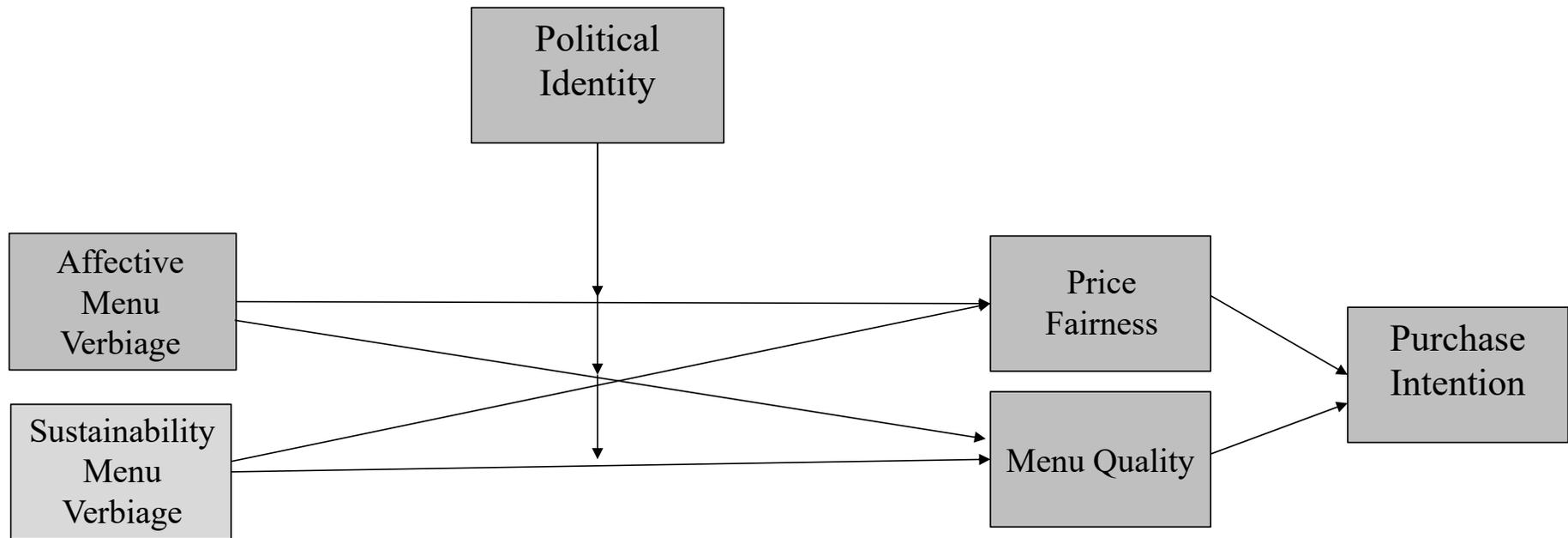


Menu Quality

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Menu Quality				
Treatm	3 Political Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Conservative	4.31	.540	19
	Liberal	4.26	.951	20
	Moderate	3.92	.670	13
	Total	4.19	.756	52
Affective	Conservative	4.17	.455	24
	Liberal	4.88	1.078	22
	Moderate	4.00	.496	10
	Total	4.42	.845	56
Sustainable	Conservative	3.93	.874	22
	Liberal	4.67	.803	16
	Moderate	4.10	.449	11
	Total	4.21	.829	49
Total	Conservative	4.13	.656	65
	Liberal	4.61	.985	58
	Moderate	4.00	.545	34
	Total	4.28	.813	157

- Under the sustainability menu condition, a significant and positive relationship was identified between menu quality and purchase intention
- For political identity vs. menu condition the liberal x affective menu was the only path that achieved significance, $p < 0.03$
- A significant relationship was established between menu quality and purchase intention under the affective menu condition (PLS)

Conceptual Framework



Key Outcomes

- Menu quality is critically important in consumer assessment, and it is relevant to positive purchase intention
- Price fairness and menu quality appear to influence purchase intention across all conditions
- Affective menu terminology is acceptable to all groups and inclusion of terminology which references tradition does not appear to dissuade purchase intention by liberals. This is at variance to previous findings indicating that liberals would be less accepting of affective menu terms
- The findings in this study indicate that menu quality has a greater potential effect on purchase intention amongst conservative vs. liberals
- Price fairness has a greater potential effect on purchase intention for liberal v. conservative
- When political identity is substituted for menu treatment, the model is significant in all relationships and in ANOVA, this indicates that political identity may directly influence price fairness and menu quality, and thus purchase intention

Key Outcomes

- Distinct menu terminology preferences were correlated around terms related to sustainability and ethics
- Conservatives were clustered around terms related to affective terminology
- Conservatives showed significant responses around more terms than liberals did
- Conservatives generally reacted more strongly to terms than did liberals
- For political identity, a significant difference was noted between conservatives and liberals for assessment of price fairness and menu quality and purchase intention
- Sustainable menus were rated lower than affective menus
- Adds to the literature supporting that increased menu detail positively influences purchase intention (McCall & Lynn, 2008; Wansink, 2001)
- In the affective menu condition, political identity appears to influence purchase intention extending the literature (Gueguen & Jacob, 2011)

Discussion

- Price fairness was equal across menu conditions as expected. As respondents were only exposed to one condition, if they were to see affective and sustainable terms together, would they assess them differently
- Price fairness and purchase intention both indicated a negative skew, were these results a consequence to a difficulty in imagining purchase intention based on a small, online menu sample
 - With Covid-19 related shutdown of restaurants, does this indicate a negative, underlying intentionality towards price perceptions and purchase intentions in restaurant purchases
- Previous research has indicated liberals may be less accepting of affective verbiage (Tal et al., 2017). This was not found here. This may indicate liberals have become more accepting of this verbiage
- Previous research has suggested a relationship between consumer behavior and political identity, ancillary findings suggest a relationship between political identity, price fairness and menu quality
- Sustainability terms may lack same emotive effect that affective terms seem to have. Sustainability may be evaluated more by price fairness

Future Research

- Differences between liberals and conservatives indicated that price fairness would have a greater potential effect on purchase intention for liberal identities versus conservative
 - These results are promising for continued research on whether attitudes towards pricing differ markedly between consumers across different political groups
 - This work did not identify support for all of the hypotheses, but the ancillary findings suggest that a relationship exists between political identity, price fairness, and menu quality
- The differences between Liberals and Conservatives on assessment of menu quality opens the question for future research on what might be driving this difference
- A significant, positive relationship between political identity and purchase intention was noted among the liberal group, this opens the door for additional research
- A relationship between political identity as a moderator for purchase intention for both price fairness and menu quality was identified in the overall model. An exploration of the parameters for this relationship may be of interest
- Previous research has indicated liberals respond more positively to sustainable verbiage vs. conservatives. This was not supported in this study (Kidwell, Farmer, & Hardesty, 2013).
- Research regarding intuitive reactions to food words and political identity could also be explored under Moral Foundations theory

Contribution of the Study

- Political identity moderated the relationship of menu quality and price fairness with purchase intention under the overall model, as was price fairness under the liberal political identity.
- Political identity had a direct influence on purchase intention in the overall model (Witzling & Shaw, 2017).
- In the affective menu condition, political identity appears to influence purchase intention extending the literature (Gueguen & Jacob, 2011)
- Adds to the literature supporting the finding that positive assessment of price fairness and menu quality is critical to influencing purchase intention (Mathe-Soulek, 2016; Parsa & Njite, 2004).
- Menu quality appears to influence purchase intention under all conditions, reinforcing current literature (Grunnert, 1995; Namkung & Jang, 2007)
- Adds to the literature supporting that increased menu detail positively influences purchase intention (McCall & Lynn, 2008; Wansink, 2001)

Exit



Appendix-additional slides

Limitations

- The research was undertaken during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, which, in addition to all of its other consequences, effectively closed most in-restaurant dining between mid-March 2020
- Respondents may not have the same level of engagement with the menu that they would have in an actual restaurant scenario.
- The research for this dissertation was also undertaken during the 2020 presidential election cycle. While results were collected during the primaries versus the general election cycle, it is not known to what degree the presidential campaign may have increased the degree to which political identity would be actively impactful

H1 and H2

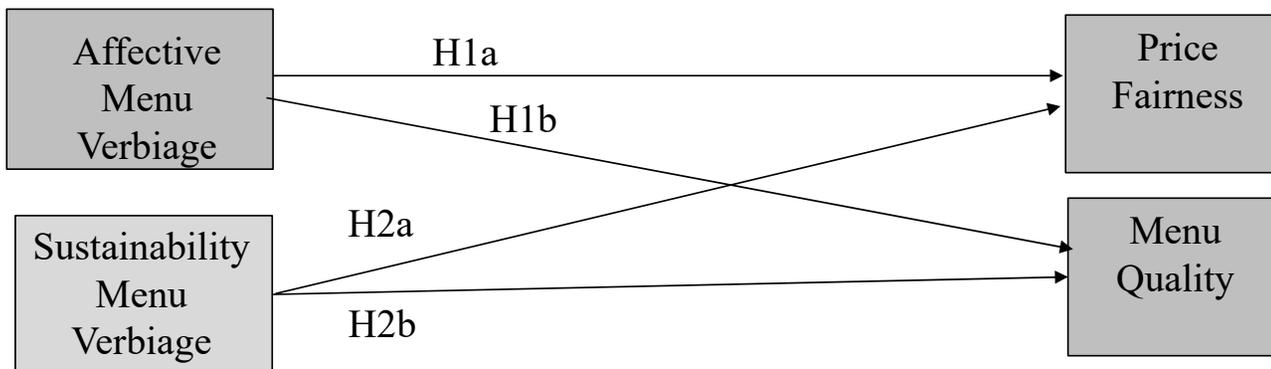
H1: Affective menu verbiage will have a positive effect on

- (a) price
- (b) quality

H2: Sustainability Menu Verbiage will have a positive effect on assessments of:

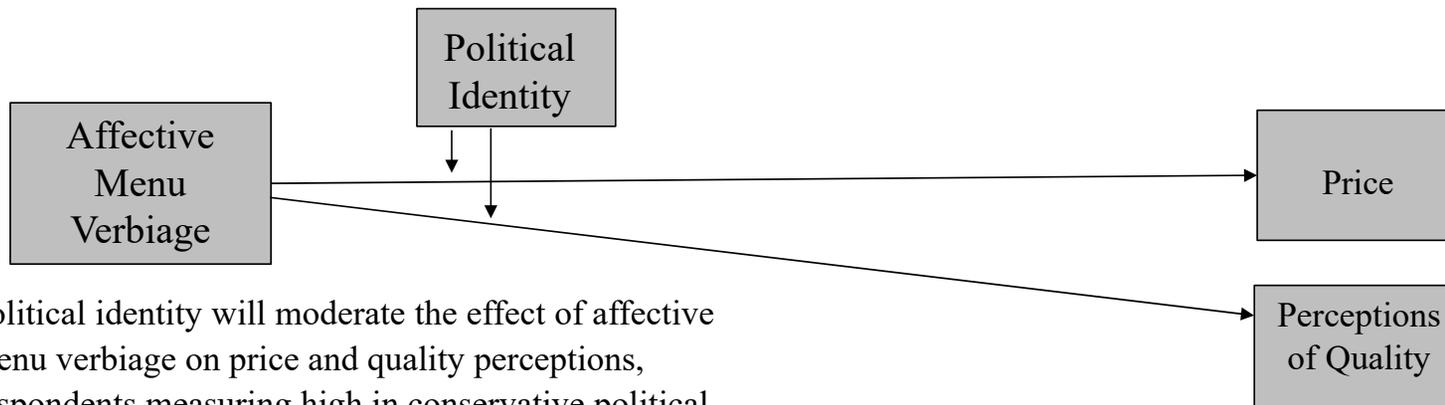
- (a) price
- (b) quality

	Menu Quality	Price Fairness	Hypothesis
Affective Menu	4.14	4.59	H1: Not supported
Sustainable Menu	4.23	4.63	H2: Not supported
Control Menu	4.06	4.65	
Model Quality	$F(1, 141) = 0.570, p < .985$	$F(1, 141) = 0.002, p < .998$	



Under the sustainability menu condition, a significant and positive relationship was identified between menu quality and purchase intention

Hypothesis H3



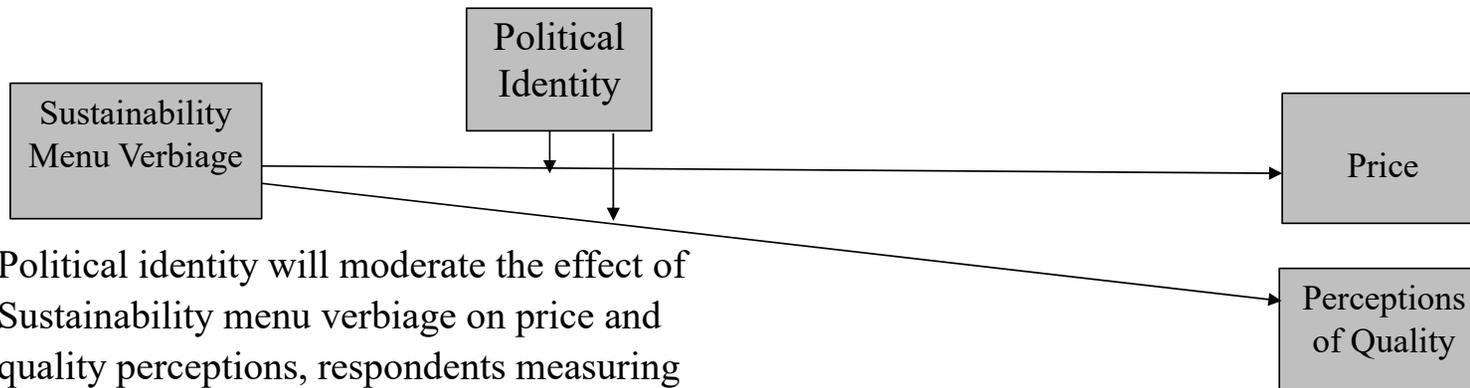
Political identity will moderate the effect of affective menu verbiage on price and quality perceptions, respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will rate higher levels of :

- a) price fairness versus liberal respondents
- b) menu quality versus liberal respondents

- For political identity vs. menu condition the liberal x affective menu was the only path that achieved significance, $p < 0.03$

Affective Menu x Political ID	Path Coefficients-diff (Conservative - Affective Menu)	Path Coefficient s-diff (Liberal - Affective Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Liberal vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value new (Conservative vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value new (Liberal vs. Affective Menu)
Menu Quality-Mod -Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	-0.2	-0.032	0.868	0.572	0.132	0.428
Price Fair-Mod Pol ID-> Purchase Intention	0.128	0.043	0.25	0.422	0.25	0.422
Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.218	-0.11	0.13	0.716	0.13	0.284
Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	-0.16	0.244	0.741	0.148	0.259	0.148
Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	0.303	0.521	0.059	0.003	0.059	0.003

Hypothesis H4



Political identity will moderate the effect of Sustainability menu verbiage on price and quality perceptions, respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will have a less favorable perception of::

- a) price fairness versus liberal respondents
- b) menu quality versus liberal

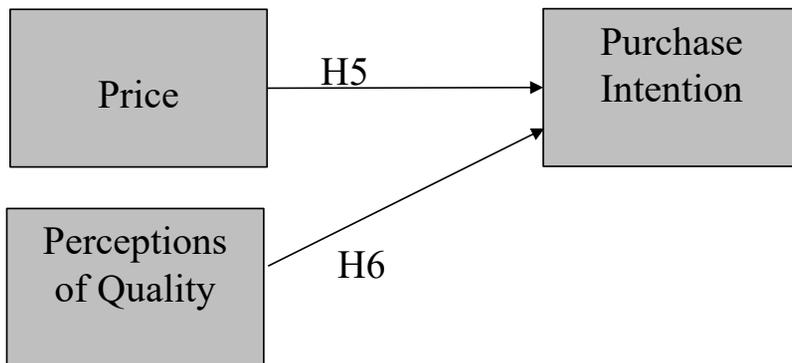
For the sustainability menu, control menu, and affective menu all indicate significance between menu quality and purchase intention ($p < 0.05$)

Sustainability Menu x Political ID	Path Coefficient s-diff (Conservative - Sust Menu)	Path Coefficients -diff (Liberal - Sust Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs. Sust Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Liberal vs. Sust Menu)	p-Value new (Conservative vs. Sust Menu)	p-Value new (Liberal vs. Sust Menu)
Menu Qual-Mod Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	-0.204	-0.036	0.801	0.569	0.199	0.431
Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.186	-0.142	0.183	0.775	0.183	0.225
Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	-0.026	0.192	0.51	0.213	0.490	0.213
Price Fair-Mod Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	0.077	-0.008	0.358	0.532	0.358	0.468
Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	-0.200	0.204	0.813	0.156	0.187	0.156

H5 and H6

H5: Price fairness will positively influence purchase intention.

H6: Perceptions of menu quality will positively influence purchase intention.



	Path to Purchase Intention	Path Coefficient
	Menu Quality	0.534
	Price Fairness	0.188

Complete Model		Sample Mean (M)	T Stat	P Values	Sig (p<0.05)
H6	Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.471	6.827	0.000	Yes
	Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.187	2.796	0.023	Yes
	Pol ID->Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	-0.27	3.931	0.005	Yes
	Pol ID->Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.173	2.096	0.040	Yes
H5	H5: Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.343	4.351	0.023	Yes

Results that indicated positive associations between price fairness, satisfaction, and purchase intention.

H3 and H4 – Willingness to Pay

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay Price Premium

Treatm	3 Political Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Conservative	5.14	1.726	19
	Liberal	3.63	1.651	20
	Moderate	3.97	1.221	13
	Total	4.27	1.697	52
Affective	Conservative	4.65	1.638	24
	Liberal	5.20	.814	22
	Moderate	4.77	1.389	10
	Total	4.89	1.325	56
Sustainable	Conservative	4.44	1.673	22
	Liberal	4.33	1.573	16
	Moderate	5.27	.975	11
	Total	4.59	1.529	49
Total	Conservative	4.72	1.674	65
	Liberal	4.42	1.502	58
	Moderate	4.63	1.292	34
	Total	4.59	1.532	157

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay Price Premium

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	49.810 ^a	13	3.832	1.733	.060
Intercept	124.976	1	124.976	56.534	.000
ActAge	.834	1	.834	.377	.540
Edu	3.868	1	3.868	1.750	.188
Income	.005	1	.005	.002	.961
Gender	.003	1	.003	.001	.970
IDStreng	1.903E-5	1	1.903E-5	.000	.998
Treatm	10.129	2	5.065	2.291	.105
PolDCat3	2.900	2	1.450	.656	.520
Treatm * PolDCat3	28.610	4	7.153	3.236	.014
Error	316.120	143	2.211		
Total	3673.439	157			
Corrected Total	365.930	156			

a. R Squared = .136 (Adjusted R Squared = .058)

Reliability of Scales

- Study utilized existing, validated scales
- Assessment of the Measurement Model
 - Internal consistency
 - Cronbach's Alpha satisfied criterion of 0.70
- Convergent Reliability
 - AVE above 0.50
- Discriminant Reliability and Indicator Reliability
 - All above critical values of 0.70

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Menu Quality	0.80	0.86	0.88	0.70
Price Fairness	0.94	0.94	0.96	0.90
Purchase Intention	0.80	0.80	0.88	0.72

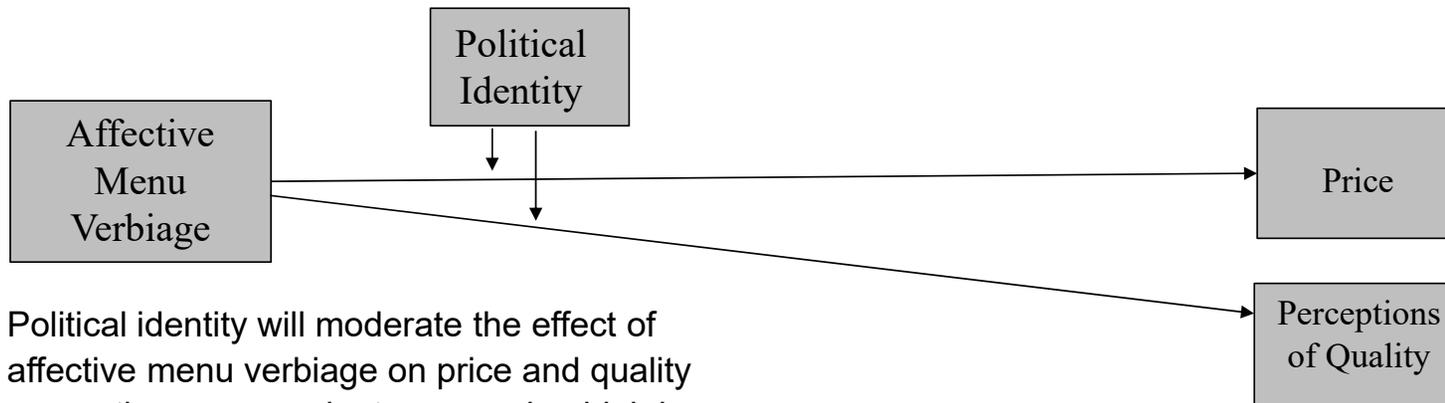
Multi-Group Analysis

- For political identity vs. menu condition in multi-group analysis, the liberal x affective menu was the only path that achieved significance, $p < 0.03$
- The path coefficient (0.521) was also strong. This may indicate that affective menu terminology is acceptable to this group and inclusion of terminology which references tradition does not dissuade purchase intention

Affective Menu x Political ID	Path Coefficients-diff (Conservative - Affective Menu)	Path Coefficients-diff (Liberal - Affective Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Liberal vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value new (Conservative vs. Affective Menu)	p-Value new (Liberal vs. Affective Menu)
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Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	0.303	0.521	0.059	0.003	0.059	0.003

Sustainability Menu x Political ID	Path Coefficients-diff (Conservative - Sust Menu)	Path Coefficients-diff (Liberal - Sust Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs. Sust Menu)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Liberal vs. SustMenu)	p-Value new (Conservative vs. Sust Menu)	p-Value new (Liberal vs. Sust Menu)
Menu Qual-Mod -> Purchase Intention	-0.204	-0.036	0.801	0.569	0.199	0.431
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Price Fair-Mod -> Purchase Intention	0.077	-0.008	0.358	0.532	0.358	0.468
Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	-0.200	0.204	0.813	0.156	0.187	0.156

Hypothesis H3-Not Supported

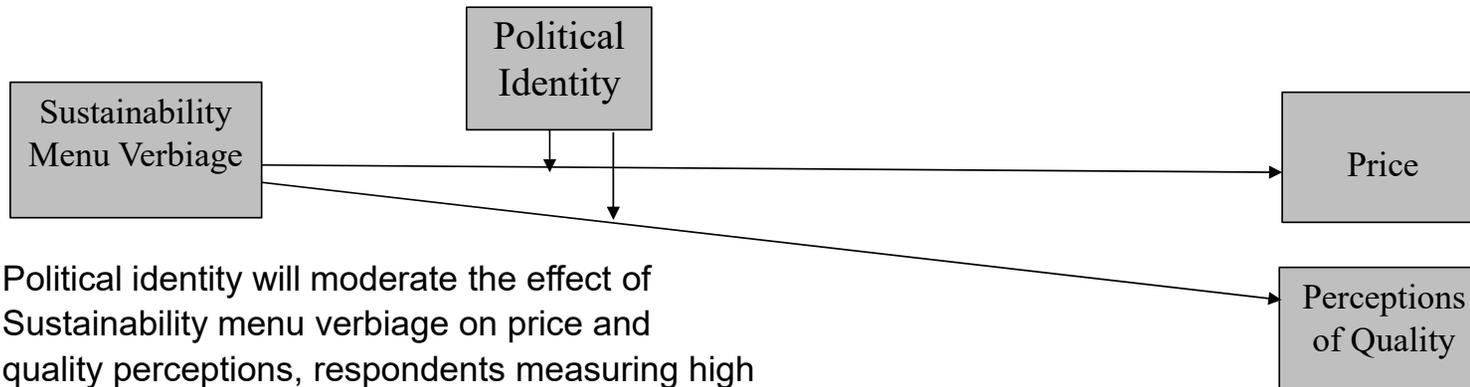


Political identity will moderate the effect of affective menu verbiage on price and quality perceptions, respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will rate higher levels of :

- a) price fairness versus liberal respondents
- b) menu quality versus liberal respondents

	Path Coefficients-diff (Conservative - Liberal)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Conservative vs Liberal)	p-Value new (Conservative vs Liberal)
Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	-0.436	0.982	0.018
Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.386	0.018	0.018
Menu Qual x Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.266	0.95	0.05
Price Fairness x Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	0.252	0.103	0.103
Political Identity -> Purchase Intention	-0.207	0.83	0.17

Hypothesis H4-Not Supported



Political identity will moderate the effect of Sustainability menu verbiage on price and quality perceptions, respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will have a less favorable perception of:

- a) price fairness versus liberal respondents
- b) menu quality versus liberal

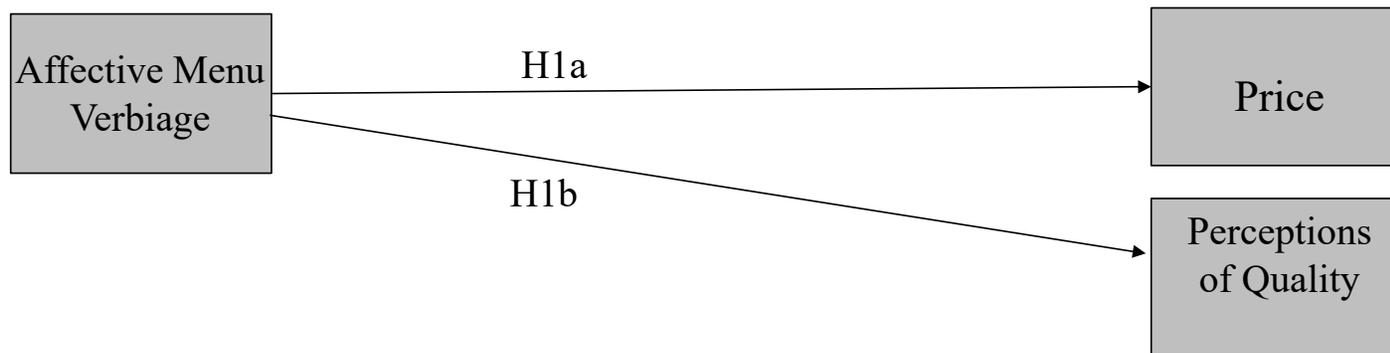
Menu Condition- Sustainability					
	Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.387	2.898	0.007	Yes
	Pol ID -> Purchase Intention	-0.275	2.193	0.388	No
	Pol ID->Menu Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.006	0	0.448	No
	Pol ID->Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.063	0.543	0.465	No
	Price Fairness -> Purchase Intention	0.251	1.681	0.043	Yes

Hypothesis Model

H1: Affective menu verbiage will have a positive effect on

(a) price

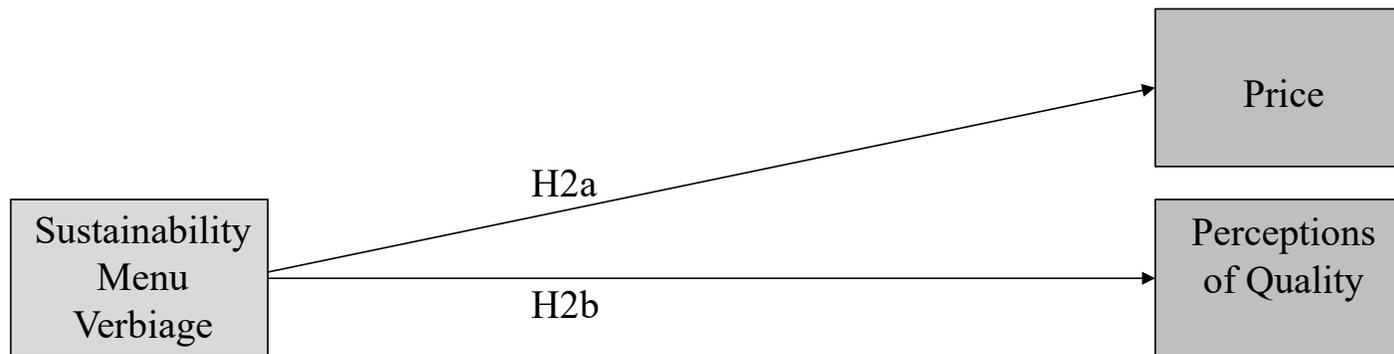
(b) quality



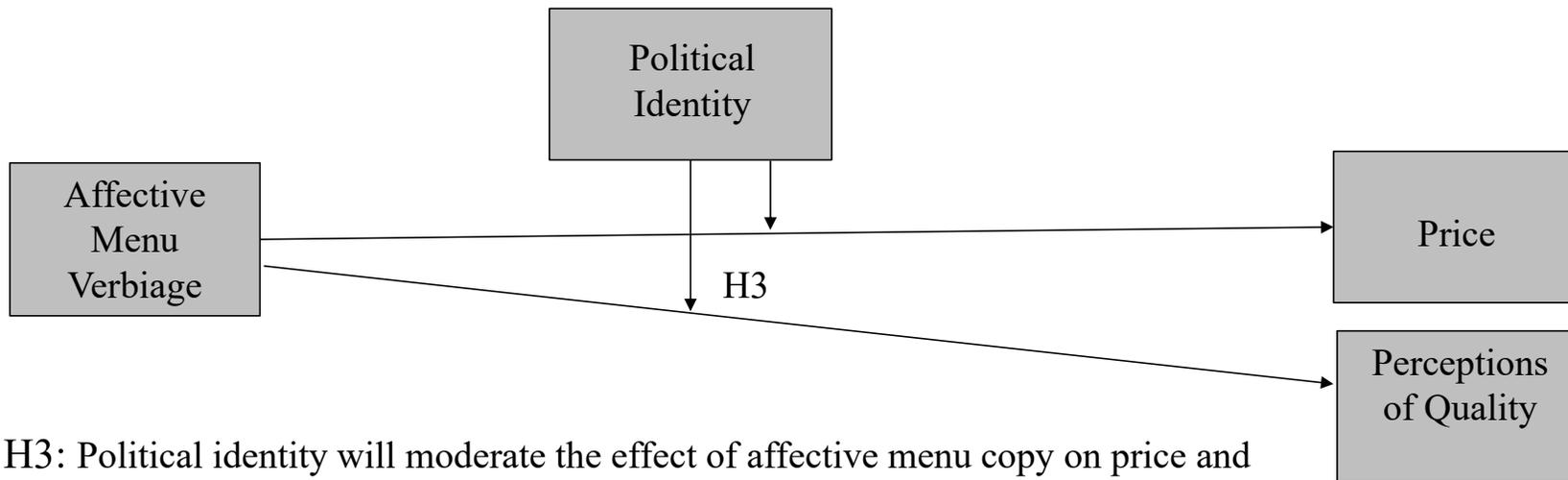
Hypothesis Model

H2: Sustainability claims will have a positive effect on assessments of:

- (a) price
- (b) quality



Hypothesis Model

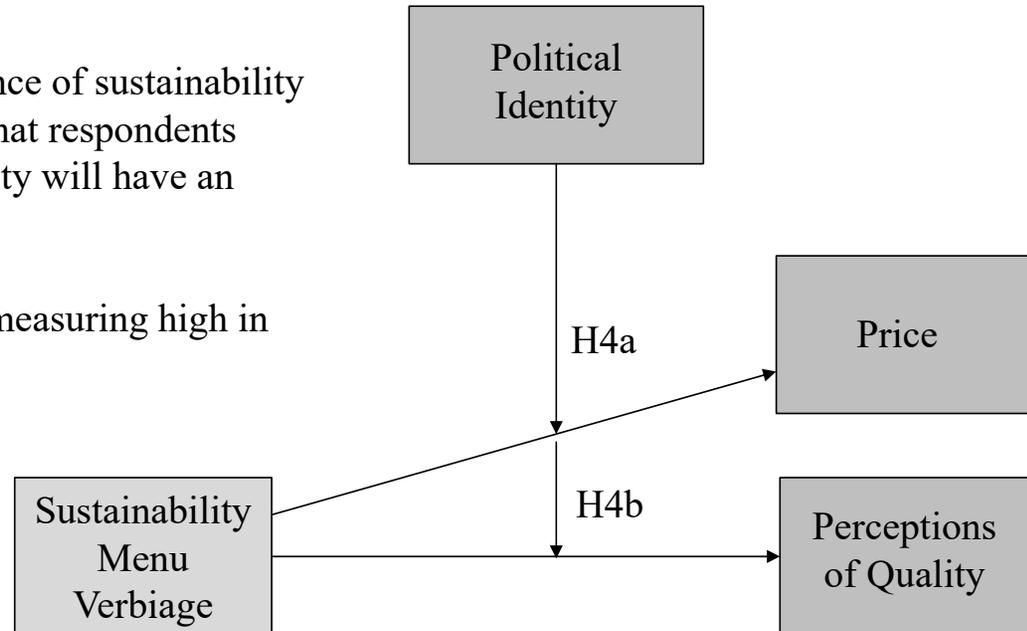


H3: Political identity will moderate the effect of affective menu copy on price and quality perceptions, such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will perceive higher levels of price and quality versus respondents measuring high in liberal political identity.

Hypothesis Model

H4: Political identity will moderate the influence of sustainability claims on price and quality perceptions such that respondents measuring high in conservative political identity will have an unfavorable perception of:

- a) price and
- b) quality, compared to respondents measuring high in liberal political identity.



H3 and H4 – Willingness to Pay

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay Price Premium

Treatm	3 Political Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Conservative	5.14	1.726	19
	Liberal	3.63	1.651	20
	Moderate	3.97	1.221	13
	Total	4.27	1.697	52
Affective	Conservative	4.65	1.638	24
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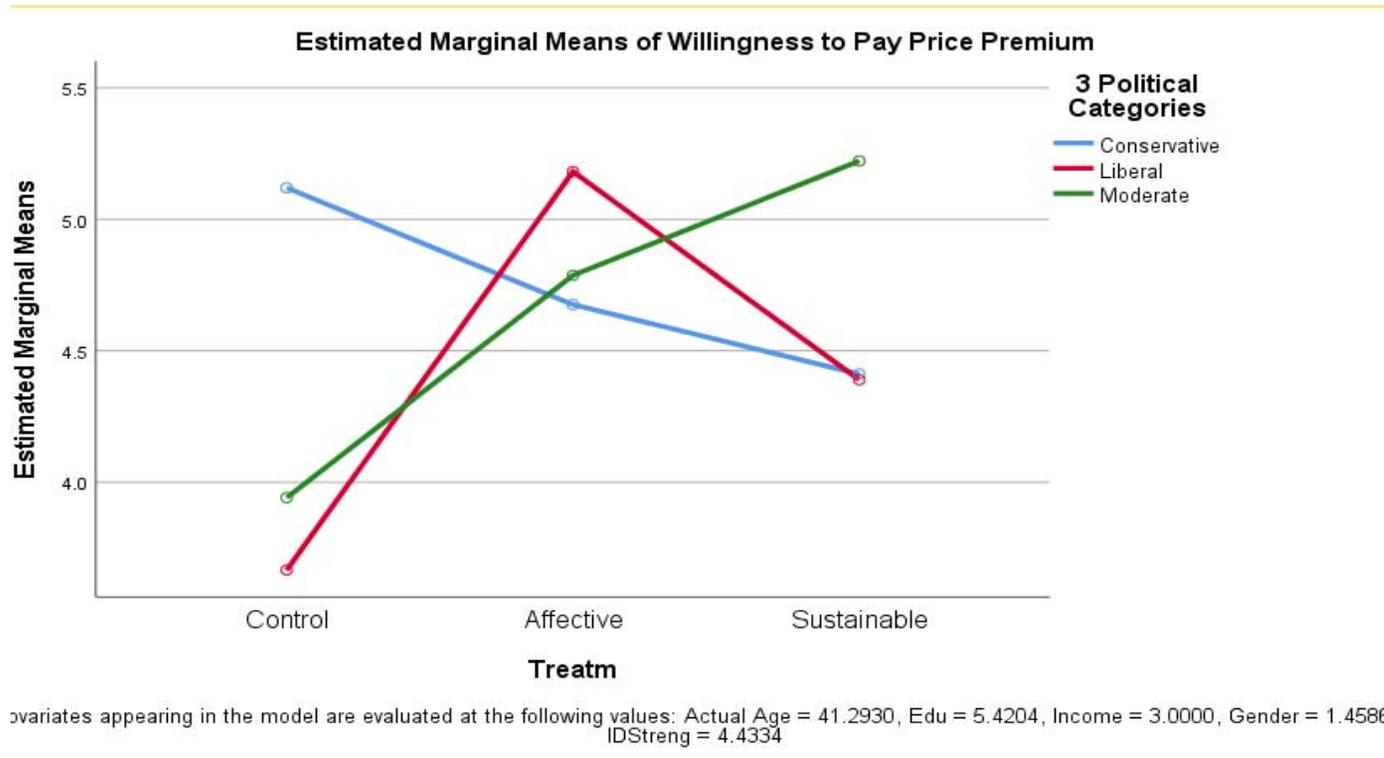
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay Price Premium

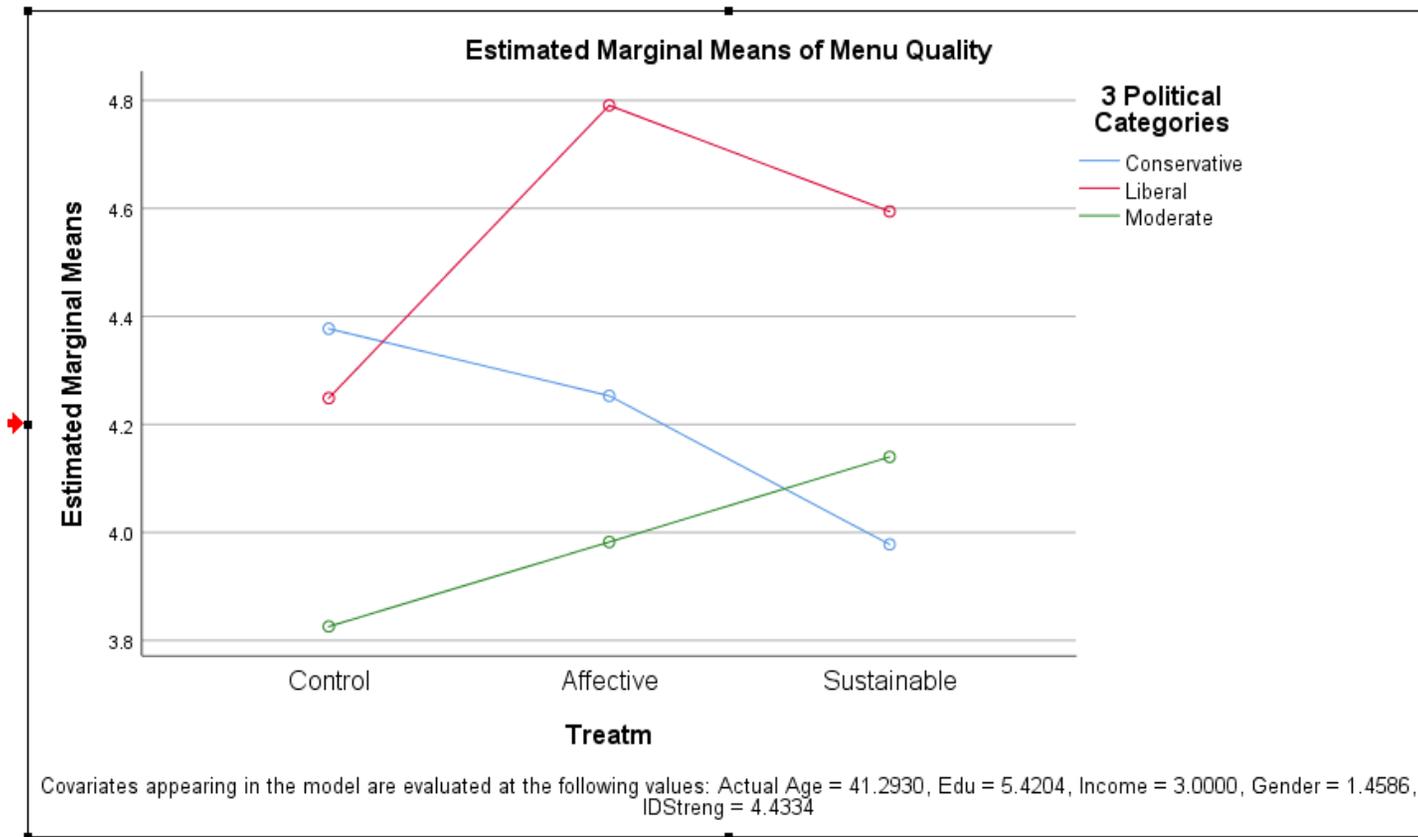
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	49.810 ^a	13	3.832	1.733	.060
Intercept	124.976	1	124.976	56.534	.000
ActAge	.834	1	.834	.377	.540
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Gender	.003	1	.003	.001	.970
IDStreng	1.903E-5	1	1.903E-5	.000	.998
Treatm	10.129	2	5.065	2.291	.105
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Error	316.120	143	2.211		
Total	3673.439	157			
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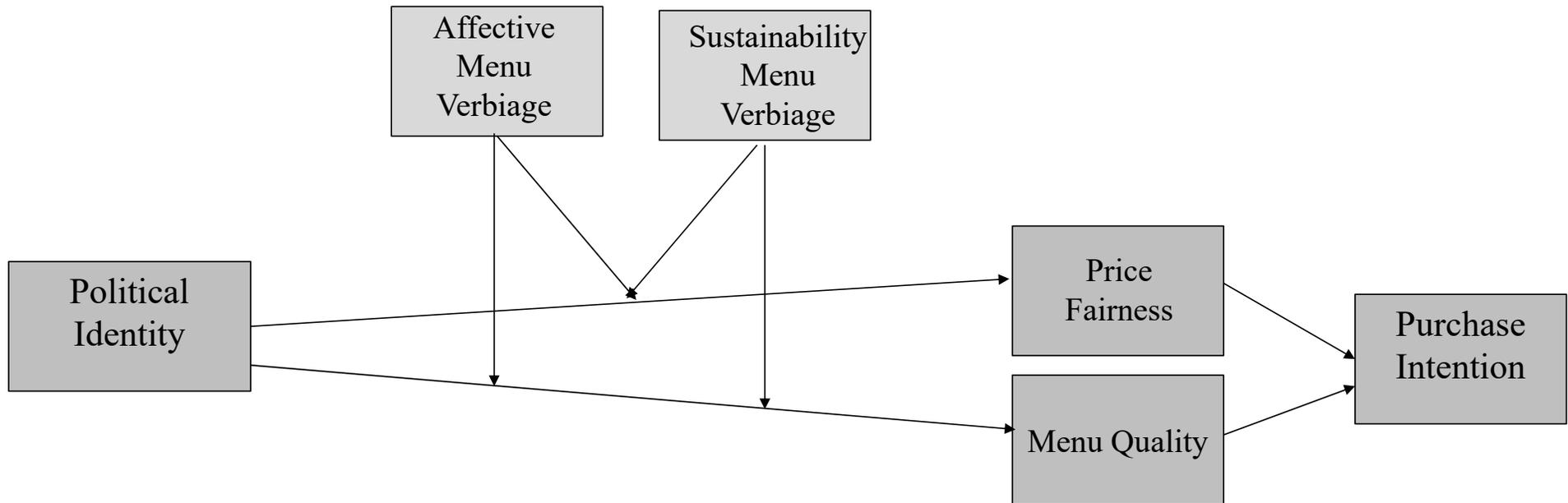
H3 and H4 – WTP Price Premium



H3 and H4 Menu Quality



Revised Conceptual Framework



H3 and H4 – Menu Quality

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Menu Quality

Treatm	3 Political Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Conservative	4.31	.540	19
	Liberal	4.26	.951	20
	Moderate	3.92	.670	13
	Total	4.19	.756	52
Affective	Conservative	4.17	.455	24
	Liberal	4.88	1.078	22
	Moderate	4.00	.496	10
	Total	4.42	.845	56
Sustainable	Conservative	3.93	.874	22
	Liberal	4.67	.803	16
	Moderate	4.10	.449	11
	Total	4.21	.829	49
Total	Conservative	4.13	.656	65
	Liberal	4.61	.985	58
	Moderate	4.00	.545	34
	Total	4.28	.813	157

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Menu Quality

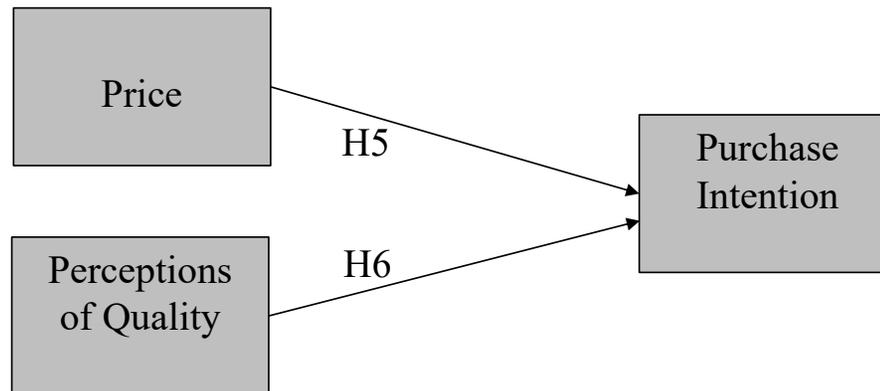
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	23.791 ^a	13	1.830	3.302	.000
Intercept	90.479	1	90.479	163.263	.000
ActAge	1.741	1	1.741	3.142	.078
Edu	2.804	1	2.804	5.060	.026
Income	3.885	1	3.885	7.010	.009
Gender	.064	1	.064	.116	.734
IDStreng	.013	1	.013	.023	.879
Treatm	.875	2	.437	.789	.456
PolIDCat3	6.942	2	3.471	6.263	.002
Treatm * PolIDCat3	4.081	4	1.020	1.841	.124
Error	79.249	143	.554		
Total	2976.975	157			
Corrected Total	103.040	156			

a. R Squared = .231 (Adjusted R Squared = .161)

Hypothesis Model

H5: Price will positively influence purchase intention.

H6: Perceptions of food quality will positively influence purchase intention.

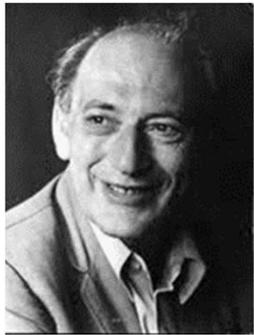


Key Terms

- **Menu Header:** A brief description of the raison d'être of the restaurant and menu.
- **Menu Complexity** - refers to descriptive detail in the menu copy. Increased menu complexity has been positively associated with consumers' reactions to the menu and to the facility (Wansink et al., 2002).
- **Menu Labels** – refers to the primary naming aspect of an item (e.g., Hardwood Grilled Salmon).
 - **Affective Menu Labels** – Primary name of a menu item that (for purposes of this study) carries allusions to home, tradition, and patriotism (Guegúen & Jacob, 2012).
 - **Sustainable Menu Labels** -Primary name of the menu item that incorporates terms related to sustainability.
- **Menu Copy/Verbiage** - refers to text which is used to frame consumer perception and promote the purchase of an item. This copy may be affective/sustainable
- **Political Identity** – The way a person views themselves based on their ideology regarding the underlying goals and ideas about how a social and political system should work (Grove, Remy, and Zeigler, 1974).

Theoretical Framework: Social Identity and Political Identity

Social Identity Theory:



- People derive value and well-being from social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- Individuals are motivated to achieve and maintain a positive self-concept while seeking to preserve self-identity (Rupert & Brown, 2000).
- Social Identity proceeds from group membership (Rupert & Brown, 2000), people strive to maintain self-identity.
- Group norms are internalized into one's self concept which increases the motivation to perform specific behaviors (Liv, Thomas, & Hogg 2018).
- Social Identity can be created and validated through consumption – a concept referred to a symbolic consumption (Sorensen & Thomsen, 2006; Grubb & Grathwhol, 1967).
- Use of social identity in predicting eating behavior (Liu, Thomas, & Higgs, 2019; Creys, 2011).

Theoretical Framework: Political Identity

- Individuals construct their identity through many methods and political identity is a strong mechanism for doing so.
 - Political identity may be as much as 50 percent heritable (Graham et al., 2009).
 - Longitudinal studies on early childhood traits have been found to be predictive of political views in later life and political identity serves as a robust predictor of a wide range of positions, preferences and behaviors (Wegemer & Vendell, 2020; Dunkel & Decker, 2012; Fraley, Griffin, Belsky & Roisman, 2012).
 - Political identity may be influential even when the consumer is unaware that their identity is activated (Jung & Mittal, 2020).
- Political identity influences reception to appeals, and as such, congruency between the underlying political ideologies of the target audience and appeal may increase effectiveness (Jung & Mittal, 2020).
- Appeals that are congruent with political identity will be better received, even when the appeal may seemingly be unrelated to politics (Carney et al., 2008).

Literature Review

- **Menu Verbiage:**

- Descriptive terminology increased intent to patronize a restaurant (Wansink, 2001).
- Menu verbiage has a discernable influence on choice, purchase intention, and favorability towards the restaurant (Kozup, Creyer, & Burton, 2003).
- Menu Complexity can influence purchase intention, price expectation, & quality expectation (McCall & Lynn, 2008).
- Menu verbiage is a key element of consumer assessment (Magnini & Kim, 2016).

- **Affective Menu Verbiage:**

- Affective menu terminology increased consumers intent to patronize (Wansink, et al., 2002).
- Adjectives strongly influenced consumer assessment (McCall & Lynn, 2008).
- Affective menu verbiage may appeal to sense of nostalgia (Gueguen & Jacob, 2011).

- **Sustainability Menu Verbiage:**

- Environmental ideology is a determinant of consumer choice (Kahn, 2007).
- Congruency between political identity and persuasive appeal enhances behavior (Kidwell, Farmer, & Hardesty, 2013).

Literature Review

- **Influence of Political Identity:**
 - Attachment to restaurant extends customer engagement past simple economics (Mattila, 2001).
 - Congruency between political identity and appeals enhanced purchase behavior (Kidwell et al., 2013).
 - Non-political images can serve as a predictor of political identity (Ahn et al., 2014).
 - Consumer food ratings could be influenced by indicating the company made party-specific donations (Tal et al., 2017).
 - Political identity influenced how consumers evaluated local food messages (Witzling & Shaw, 2017).
- **Price Fairness and Purchase Intention:**
 - Perceived benefit and value perceptions are often anchored by price (Xu, Summers, & Bonnie, 2004).
 - Menu descriptions are evaluated before consideration of menu prices (Parsa & Njite, 2004).
 - Menu descriptions are a critical element of the consumer's assessment of price fairness (Mathe-Soulek, 2016).
- **Perceived Menu Quality and Purchase Intention:**
 - Increases in the perceived quality offers opportunities for pricing strategies (Nagle & Holden, 2002).
 - Quality perceptions are highly correlated with purchase intention (Grunnert, 1995; Namkung & Jang, 2007).
 - Organic labels may bias taste perception (Wan-chen, Lee, Shimizu, & Wansink, 2012).

Experimental Design and Anticipated Relationship among Variables

	Affective Menu Terminology		Sustainability Menu Terminology	
Political Identity	Absent	Present	Absent	Present
Liberal	+	-	-	+
Conservative	-	+	+	-
Neither Liberal or Conservative		+		+

Questionnaire

- Online Survey Consent Form
- Introduction
- Restaurant Usage Eligibility Questions
- Pattern and Type of Restaurant Usage
- Simulated Menu Treatment
 - Affective
 - Control
 - Sustainable
- Assessment of Menu Quality
- Assessment of Purchase Intention
- Assessment of Price Perception
- Assessment of Restaurant Quality
- Assessment of Political Identity
- Assessment of Other Menu Descriptors
- Demographic Questions:
 - Age
 - Education
 - Gender
 - Income

Literature

Influence of Political Identity:

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- Quality perceptions are highly correlated with purchase intention (Grunnert, 1995; Namkung & Jang, 2007).



Control

Menu

Our restaurant features the highest quality produce and proteins
We look forward to serving you from our kitchen
Menu items may vary based on seasonality and our chef's inspiration

Cast Iron Chicken

Cast Iron Chicken with braised greens, pan-roasted sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce,
and a biscuit
\$18

Tavern Steak

Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with local blue cheese, roasted red skin potatoes, braised
seasonal greens, caramelized onion jam, and herb butter sauce
\$25

Roasted Vegetable Gnocchi

Roasted vegetables and charred kale tossed with a herb gnocchi, in a brown butter sauce
\$15

Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Fresh Salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and ginger. Hardwood
grilled and served over braised, seasonal greens
\$22





Affective

Menu

Our All-American restaurant features produce, and proteins are sourced from the heartland. We support our traditional community producers and purchase all-American made products and favor veteran-owned producers.

Items are subject to change based on availability.
Our seasonal menus are created based on recipes from traditional family favorites.

Mom's Cast Iron Chicken

Lodge Cast Iron Roasted Farm Raised Chicken with braised, hand-picked greens, pan roasted sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce and a homemade biscuit just like mom used to make
\$18

Tavern Steak

Texas raised Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with local blue cheese, hearth roasted red skin potatoes, slow braised Southern chard, caramelized Vidalia onion jam, and our secret family recipe herb butter sauce
\$25

Roasted Vegetables with Herb Dumplings

Hearth Roasted vegetables with Grandma's herb gnocchi dumplings, in a brown butter sauce
\$15

Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Alaskan Salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and herbs. American oak grilled and served over braised, seasonal greens
\$22





Sustainability

Menu

Our restaurant is fully committed to sustainability. Our ingredients are sourced from within 200 miles of the restaurant to reduce carbon footprint

We support businesses and source from vendors and farmers who produce in a sustainable manner. Our proteins are GMO-free and antibiotic-free.

All menu items are planned with international sustainability standards in mind

Cast Iron Chicken

Sustainable and Locally raised, Antibiotic-free cast iron roasted chicken with locally harvested braised greens, locally grown sweet potatoes, honey butter pan sauce, and a biscuit

\$18

Tavern Steak

Seared, Hormone and GMO Free Sustainable Grilled Flat-iron steak topped with local blue cheese, roasted local potatoes, braised seasonal greens, caramelized onion jam, and herb butter sauce

\$25

Roasted Vegetable Gnocchi

Locally grown organic roasted vegetables tossed with house-made herb gnocchi in a brown butter sauce

\$15

Hardwood Grilled Citrus Honey Salmon

Our sustainably sourced salmon and naturally fed salmon, rubbed with honey, citrus juices, garlic, red pepper flakes and ginger. Hardwood grilled and served over braised, seasonal greens

\$22

Self Assessment of Liberal and Conservatives

- Respondents indicated whether they were liberal or conservative:
 - When talking about 'liberal/conservative' how often do you use the term 'we' versus "they"?
 - How well term does the term “liberal/conservative” describe you?
 - To what extent do you think of yourself as a “liberal/conservative”?
 - How important is being a “liberal/conservative” to you?
 - How important is your political identity to how you view yourself?
 - To what extent is your political identity one of the first things you would tell someone about yourself?

Dissertation Committee



Dr. Tracy Kizer
Committee Chair



Dr. Greg Marshall
Second Chair



Dr. Mary Conway Dato-on
Outside Reader